# BYZANTINE WARFARE

## John Haldon
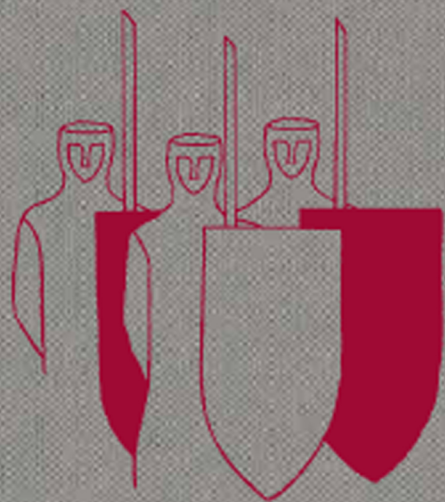
# Byzantine Warfare

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# Byzantine Warfare

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# Acknowledgements

# Series Preface

War and military matters are key aspects of the modern world and central topics in history study. This series brings together essays selected from key journals that exhibit careful analysis of military history. The volumes, each of which is edited by an expert in the field, cover crucial time periods and geographical areas including Europe, the USA, China, Japan, Latin America, and South Asia. Each volume represents the editor's selection of the most seminal recent essays on military history in their particular area of expertise, while an introduction presents an overview of the issues in that area, together with comments on the background and significance of the essays selected.

This series reflects important shifts in the subject. Military history has increasingly taken a cultural turn, forcing us to consider the question of what wins wars in a new light. Historians used to emphasise the material aspects of war, specifically the quality and quantity of resources. That approach, bringing together technological proficiency and economic strength, appeared to help explain struggles for mastery within the West, as well as conflicts between the West and non-West. Now, the focus is rather on strategic culture – how tasks are set and understood – and on how resources are used. It involves exploring issues such as fighting quality, unit cohesion, morale, leadership, tactics, strategy, as well as the organisational cultural factors that affect assessment and use of resources. Instead of assuming that organisational issues were driven by how best to use, move and supply weapons, this approach considers how they are affected by social patterns and developments.

Former assumptions by historians that societies are driven merely by a search for efficiency and maximisation of force as they adapt their weaponry to optimise performance in war ignored the complex process in which interest in new weapons interacted with the desire for continuity. Responses by warring parties to firearms, for example, varied, with some societies, such as those of Western Europe, proving keener to rely on firearms than others, for example in East and South Asia. This becomes easier to understand by considering the different tasks and possibilities facing armies at the time – when it is far from clear which weaponry, force structure, tactics, or operational method can be adopted most successfully – rather than thinking in terms of clear-cut military progress.

Cultural factors also play a role in responses to the trial of combat. The understanding of loss and suffering, at both the level of ordinary soldiers and of societies as a whole, is far more culturally conditioned than emphasis on the sameness of battle might suggest, and variations in the willingness to suffer losses influences both military success and styles of combat.

Furthermore, war is not really about battle but about attempts to impose will. Success in this involves far more than victory on the battlefield; that is just a pre-condition of a more complex process. The defeated must be willing to accept the verdict of battle. This involves accommodation, if not acculturation – something that has been far from constant in different periods and places. Assimilating local religious cults, co-opting local élites, and, possibly, today, offering the various inducements summarised as globalisation, have been the most important means of achieving it over the years. Thus military history becomes an aspect of total history; and victory in war is best studied in terms of its multiple contexts.

Any selection of what to include is difficult. The editors in this series have done an excellent job and it has been a great pleasure working with them.

JEREMY BLACK
*Series Editor*
*University of Exeter*

# Introduction

The essays in this collection deal with some of the most important facets of Byzantine military organization and attitudes to warfare and violence. In spite of its centrality to the nature and history of medieval eastern Roman culture and civilisation – commonly referred to as 'Byzantium' – warfare and all those social and cultural phenomena associated with it have not been a particularly well-studied area of the subject. This reflects the intellectual and scholarly priorities within the field on the one hand and the broader intellectual and academic fashions of the times. Military administration had received some attention, especially where it intersected with the history of the state, or finance and politics, and general comments on the effectiveness of Byzantine armies and their superior tactics and strategy had appeared in several volumes dealing with the history of warfare in pre-modern times, mostly written by non-Byzantinists. But from the 1960s and 1970s this began slowly to change, and the recognition that warfare was an integral element of this medieval society, a perspective which had long been accepted in western medieval studies and indeed in many other fields of pre-modern history, began to be accepted among historians of the Byzantine world. Interest focused initially on aspects of armament and tactics, or on military politics, as represented by Walter Kaegi's pioneering efforts regarding the use of archery in Byzantine armies of the middle period and the supposed role of iconoclastic thought in the motivations of soldiers and officers during the eighth and early ninth centuries. From there, interest broadened to a discussion of military organization, financing and politics and, in recent years, to issues of logistics and resources. Weapons, tactics and strategy were also increasingly evident in the literature, although it is also true that both interest in and awareness of the centrality of warfare to Byzantium remains limited even now. Attitudes to warfare and violence have received a little more attention, in part because it is apparent from certain types of text that there existed a major contradiction between the apparently pacific political theology of the Byzantine church and state, and the pragmatics of having to fight to defend God's empire on earth. And finally, study of the ways in which military organization and the army, the need to defend the empire's interests from hostile action, and the mobilisation and deployment of resources, interacted with Byzantine society at all levels, has now begun to receive the attention it deserves. For it is quite clear that the structure and shape, the very texture of Byzantine society, was both directly influenced and affected by warfare, and at the same time determined the ways in which the court and 'government' as well as provincial society were able to respond to these demands.[1]

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1    See J.F. Haldon, *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world 550-1204* (London 1999), esp. ch. 7; J.-Cl. Cheynet, *The Byzantine aristocracy and its military function* (Aldershot 2006); F. Trombley, 'War and society in rural Syria c. 502-613 A.D.: observations on the epigraphy', *BMGS* 21 (1997) 154-209. For useful critical reviews of recent literature on the late Roman and early Byzantine periods, see J.-M. Carrié, and S. Janniard, 'L'armée romaine tardive dans quelques travaux récents. 1: L'institution militaire et les modes de combat', *L'Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000) 321-341; S. Janniard, 'L'armée romaine tardive dans quelques travaux récents. 2: Stratégies et techniques militaires, *L'Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001) 351-361; and J.-M. Carrié, 'L'armée romaine tardive dans quelques travaux récents. 3: Fournitures militaires, recrutement et archéologie des fortifications', *L'Antiquité Tardive* 10 (2002) 427-442. For a

The modern interest in Byzantine military affairs and in the armies which defended the empire stretches back into the late nineteenth century and beyond. Already by the early twentieth century Sir Charles Oman's *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* had introduced an admittedly somewhat romanticised approach to the middle Byzantine army (the later period was ignored), in which Byzantium is portrayed as the noble victim of a doomed strategic situation, forced constantly to defend its beleaguered empire, seen as a bastion of Christendom and classical culture, against wave after wave of barbarian and infidel – a notion which still informs some popular writing on the history of that empire but which is, perhaps ironically, an attitude which takes its inspiration from the ideas of the Byzantines themselves.[2] Nevertheless, Oman based his analysis on the so-called *Tactica* of the Emperor Leo VI 'the Wise' (886-912)[3] and a much earlier treatise, upon which Leo's is largely, but by no means exclusively, based, attributed to the emperor Maurice (582–602), although almost certainly written by one of his leading officers at about the turn of the sixth-seventh century.[4] Oman was one of the first scholars to take this genre seriously as a source in an attempt to integrate the history of its army and of warfare into the broader pattern of Byzantine history, although at about the same time two Russian scholars, Uspenskij and Kulakovskij, were also beginning investigations of the ways in which military organization and administration were an integral part of the late Roman and especially of the Byzantine state and its structures.[5] Oman was followed by the French scholar Aussaresses, who published a detailed commentary on the late sixth-century *Strategikon* ascribed to the Emperor Maurice (582–602),[6] but who seems to have been unaware of the equally pioneering work of Yu. Kulakovskij, the Russian Byzantinist and classical scholar, whose edition of a slightly later, tenth-century, military manual, attributed to the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) was accompanied by a short but useful commentary on technical terms, and makes a major contribution to our knowledge of middle

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broader review of current trends in research, see also J. France, 'Recent writing on medieval warfare: from the fall of Rome to c. 1300', *The Journal of Military History* 65 (2001) 441-473.

2    C. W. Oman, *The art of war in the middle ages, A.D. 378-1515* (London 1885). The volume was republished in an up-to-date version and edited by J.H. Beeler in 1953 (Ithaca, NY; Cornell UP), and is now available in paperback.

3    *Leonis imperatoris tactica*, in: *PG* 107, cols. 672-1120; also ed. R. Vári, *Leonis imperatoris tactica* I (proem., const. i-xi); II (const. xii-xiii, xiv, 1-38) (*Sylloge Tacticorum Graecorum* III, Budapest, 1917-1922). A new edition of this important text is in preparation by George Dennis and Stamatina McGrath; a second volume of commentary by John Haldon is in preparation. Both will appear as Dumbarton Oaks Studies.

4    *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G.T. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg (CFHB 17, Vienna, 1981); G.T. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon. Handbook of Byzantine military strategy* (Philadelphia, 1984). New translation with detailed critical commentary: Philip Rance, *The Roman art of war in late Antiquity. The Strategikon of the emperor Maurice: a translation with introduction and commentary* (Birmingham Byzantine & Ottoman Monographs. Aldershot 2007). In the meantime a new Russian translation and commentary have appeared: see V.V. Kučma, *Strategikon Mavrikiya* (Vizantijskaya Biblioteka. Sankt Peterburg 2004).

5    F.I. Uspenskij, 'Voennoe ustrojstvo vizantijskoj imperii', *IRAIK* 6 (1900) 154-207; J. Kulakovskij, *Istorija Vizantii*, III: *602-717* (Kiev, 1915/ London, 1973), 387ff.; *idem*, 'K voprosu ob imeni i istorii Themy 'Opsikii', *Viz Vrem* 11 (1904), 49-62, and the reviews by K. Krumbacher, 'Zur Frage über die Themen des byzantinischen Reiches', *BZ* 13 (1904), 641f.

6    F. Aussaresses, *L'Armée byzantine à la fin du 6ᵉ siècle d'après le Stratégicon de l'empereur Maurice* (Bibliothèque des Universités du Midi, fasc. 14, Paris 1909).

Byzantine tactics and armament.[7] In contrast, the pioneering work of the German military historian Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, published first just after the First World War, presented the empire's military structures and strategical and tactical arrangements in the context of a broader history of warfare, in which the empire's longevity was seen as a result not of purely military influences but rather as the outcome of a range of geo-political factors. It is now available in a modern English translation, based upon the second edition published in Berlin in 1923.[8]

Even Delbrück devoted only twelve pages to Byzantine warfare and military organization, however, although his approach deserves continued attention and appreciation. Unconnected with this publication, and apparently unaware of many of the books already noted, the Greek scholar N. Kalomenopoulos devoted a monograph to the subject in 1937, but the work was heavily marked by romantic Hellenism and a nationalist perspective, and has little more than curiosity value today.[9] And after the Second World War the French historian Ferdinand Lot also published a volume on the art of war in the Middle Ages, which has a still useful, but very old-fashioned, chapter on the Byzantine armies.[10] Shortly after this the Soviet historian J.S. Rasin produced a somewhat different and often dogmatic, but nevertheless still insightful approach to the relationship between warfare and society, although it is marred, perhaps predictably, by the political and ideological exigencies of its time.[11]

A number of other writers, both in the field of Byzantine and medieval history, and in that of military history more particularly, have devoted sections or chapters to the armies of the Byzantine period. Some of these are factually inaccurate, however, and present a highly idealised, if not romanticised, picture, founded on somewhat simplistic views of Byzantine society and state organization.[12] More recent works have adopted a more balanced perspective both with regard to the value and reliability of the sources as well as to the nature of the Byzantine state and its international context, but the army and soldiers, warfare and violence have, in general, still been treated en passant, and in relation to society and the state as a whole hardly at all.[13]

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7    *Nicephori Praecepta militaria e codice Mosquensi*, ed. J. Kulakovskij, *Zapiski Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk*, viii ser., 7 (1908) no. 9. Modern edition with commentary and English translation: E. McGeer, *Sowing the dragon's teeth. Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (*DOS* XXXIII, Washington D.C., 1995), 3-59 (text), 61-78 (notes). New Russian edition: V.V. Kučma, 'O Boevom soprovoždenii', in Kučma and G.G. Litavrin, *Dva Vizantijskikh voennikh Traktata k. X veka* (Vizantijskaya Biblioteka. Sankt Peterburg 2002), 7-108 (Introd.), 109-230 (text and comm.).

8    Hans Delbrück, *History of the art of war*, vol. II: *The barbarian invasions*, trans. Walter J. Renfroe, Jr. (Lincoln-London, 1990), 339-383; vol. III: *Medieval warfare*, 189-202 with 203-215 (on the Arabs).

9    See N. Kalomenopoulos, *The military organization of the Greek empire of Byzantium* (Athens 1937) in Greek, which refers throughout to 'our' empire.

10    *L'Art militaire et les armées au moyen age en Europe et dans le Proche Orient* (Paris 1946).

11    J. S. Rasin, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* (Berlin, 1959), orig. published in Russian in the late 1940s.

12    Among the more reliable older accounts are: *The Cambridge medieval history*, IV: *The Byzantine empire*, part 2 (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 35-50; the chapter by W. Ensslin, in N.H. Baynes & H. St. L.B. Moss (eds.), *Byzantium: an introduction to East Roman civilization* (Oxford, 1969), 294-306.

13    Good detailed treatments can be found in A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his world* (London, 1973), 282-322 (the army); 323-45 (the navy); M. Whittow, *The making of orthodox Byzantium, 600-1025* (Oxford 1996), 113-26; 165-93; 323-25.

The great majority of the works discussed so far are, of course, general works, which deal with the Byzantine army as an institution and relatively briefly as part of the broader picture of Byzantine history. But in contrast to the comparative dearth of single monographs on matters related to the army as an institution, there has been a very large number of specialist articles devoted to questions about the relationship between the history of the middle Byzantine state, indeed its very survival after the seventh century, and the efficacy of the empire's military structures, since it has long been apparent that the survival of the state and the organization of its armies must have been closely causally related. In particular the question of the so-called 'theme system' gave rise to an extended debate, begun originally by the Russian scholar Feodor Uspenskij in the late nineteenth century, a debate which continues today, although many of the major issues appear to have been resolved.[14] Particularly prominent was the work of the Italian scholar Agostino Pertusi, who was also the first to write on both the administrative, political and socio-cultural impact of warfare in the early Byzantine period, concentrating on post-Roman/early Byzantine Italy in the sixth century.[15]

Works which dealt with the relationship between Byzantium and its neighbours also stimulated reflection about Byzantine military and naval organization. Eickhoff and Ahrweiler are perhaps two of the most important names associated with work that has stimulated discussion in the area of both land-based and naval warfare and history and led to further debate and the questioning of both sources and traditionally-held views.[16] It is worth noting that much of the stimulus for such discussion originated in work carried out on the later

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14    See the works of Uspenskij and Kulakovskij cited in note 4, above; and also the review by L. Bréhier, 'La transformation de l'empire byzantin sous les Héraclides', *Journal des savants* (1917), 401-415, 445-453, 498-506; as well as: H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung. Abhandlungen d. königl. sächsichen Gesellschaft d. Wiss.*, phil.-hist. Kl. (Leipzig, 1899/Amsterdam, 1966); E.W. Brooks, 'Arabic lists of Byzantine themes', *JHS* 21 (1901), 167-177; J.B. Bury, 'The *aplekta* of Asia Minor', *Byzantis* 2 (1911-1912) 216-224; J.B. Bury, 'The naval policy of the Roman empire in relation to the western provinces from the seventh to the ninth century', in: *Centenaria della Nascita di Michele Amari* II (Palermo, 1910) 21-34; J.B. Bury, *The imperial administrative system in the ninth century, with a revised text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (British Academy Supplemental Papers I, London, 1911); Ch. Diehl, *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Exarchat de Ravenne* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 53, Paris, 1888); Ch. Diehl, 'L'origine du régime des Thèmes dans l'empire byzantin', in: Ch. Diehl, *Études Byzantines* (Paris, 1905), 276-292; E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II und Tiberius Konstantinus* (Stuttgart, 1919), esp. 117-140 ('Zur Entstehung der Themenverfassung'). For the modern literature and a detailed account of the debate, see J.F. Haldon, 'Military service, military lands and the status of soldiers: current problems and interpretations', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993) 1-67 (= II, 1 in this collection). See also C. Zuckerman, 'Learning from the enemy and more: studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium', *Millenium* 2 (2006), 79-135, which deals both with the early military provinces as well as the naval resources of the empire in the seventh-eighth centuries.

15    A. Pertusi, 'Ordinamenti militari, guerre in Occidente e teoria di guerra dei Bizantini (secc. VI-X)', in: *Ordinamenti militari in Ocidente nell'alto medioevo*. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo XV, 1967 (Spoleto 1968) 1, 631-700.

16    E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland* (Berlin 1966); H. Ahrweiler, 'Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX -XI siècles', *BCH* 84 (1960), 1-109; *eadem, Byzance et la mer: la marine de guerre, la politique at les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VII -XV siècles* (Paris 1966). Nor should we omit H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, whose analysis of the origins of the middle Byzantine naval *themata* was firmly rooted in a traditional Marxist social-political analysis. While one may take issue with some elements of her interpretation, this, too, was in many respects a pioneering work in respect of the questions it posed and the

Roman army, which had received, and continues to receive, a great deal more attention, and it is largely out of studies of this period that historians of Byzantine military organization and of the relationship between warfare and society have drawn much of their inspiration – specific studies of late Roman institutions provided good examples of the issues that needed to be addressed if similar progress was to be made in understanding Byzantine military structures and developments.[17] During the 1980s and 1990s articles on the relationship between the army and the fiscal system, the army and the politics of the state elite or aristocracy, on various aspects of Byzantine military administration, on weaponry and military technology, on strategy, and on the interface between the army and religion, proliferated.[18]

Until comparatively recently there were no monographs at all on the Byzantine army or its social and political role, but this picture has changed in the last 20 years or so. In 1984 the present editor published a detailed history of the imperial élite forces from the sixth through to the early tenth century, which touched both upon the nature of the structural continuities and discontinuities from late Roman to Byzantine military organization, as well as the social position of soldiers and the units in question in the broader context of Byzantine history.[19] In 1992 Mark Bartusis produced a survey and analysis of the history of the late Byzantine army from the thirteenth to mid-fifteenth century, a subject which had, with a few exceptions, been more-or-less entirely neglected in the literature referred to above.[20] This is still the only detailed analysis in any language of the later Byzantine armies in their social, economic and political context (for the period 1204–1453), although new work is forthcoming.[21] The first part of the book deals with the army as an instrument of state policy, providing a reign-by-reign account of the army in action, its role in the social and political problems of the late empire. The second part analyses thematically the military structures of the late empire, examining mercenaries and their financing, the role and importance of soldier-smallholders and holders of state revenue grants (holders of *pronoiai*) to support their military service,

interpretative framework it espoused. See H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Études d'histoire maritime à Byzance, à propos du Thème des Caravisiens* (Bibliothèque Générale de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, VIe section) (Paris 1966).

17 To name but two items from a very considerable older literature: R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin 1920); D. Van Berchem, *L'Armée de Dioclétien et la réforme Constantinienne* (Paris 1952). For more recent work with detailed bibliographies, see Karen R. Dixon & Pat Southern, *The late Roman army* (London 1996); H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350-425* (Oxford 1996); D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*. Epigraphische Studien 7/I. Düsseldorf/Köln 1969; R.S.O. Tomlin, 'The army of the late Empire', in *The Roman world*, ed. J. Wacher, I (London 1987/1990), 107-33.

18 Most of this literature is in the usual western European languages – English, French and German, as well as modern Greek, but there are a number of other scholars who have devoted single articles to a particular aspect of Byzantine military history writing in Russian, for example. Among the more important is the Russian scholar Vassili Kučma; but his work is written for the specialist Byzantinist, and remains untranslated. See, for example, V.V. Kučma, 'Komandniyi sostav i ryadovye stratioty v femnon vojske Vizantii v konce IX-X v.' [Commanding officers and rank-and-file soldiers in the theme armies in Byzantium, late 9th-10th centuries], in: *Vizantijskie Očerki* (Moscow, 1971), 86-97.

19 *Byzantine Praetorians: an administrative, institutional and social survey of the Opsikion and tagmata, c.580-900* (Poikila Byzantina 3. Bonn 1984).

20 Mark C. Bartusis, *The late Byzantine army. Arms and society, 1204-1453* (Philadelphia, 1992).

21 Cf. the PhD. Thesis on the subject by Savvas Kyriakides, University of Birmingham, Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, 2007.

the place of professional troops, the means of their recruitment, and the role of retainers and peasant militias. He proceeds to analyse campaign organization, tactical and strategic roles and differentiation between unit types, and weapons and equipment. The book provides an excellent overview, and is especially informative on the vexed question of the *pronoia*, thought by many historians until recently to represent an element of 'feudal' social and economic organization, but shown by Bartusis to be no more than a fiscal device for the appropriation, distribution and consumption of particular types of resource in order to maintain military forces. The volume also examines the important role of soldiers in society and their position in the Byzantine world-view.

In 1995 Warren Treadgold also published a book, covering the period from the third to the eleventh century, dealing with late Roman and Byzantine military organization, especially tactical structure, pay and numbers. He attempts to calculate the exact size of units of different categories in the later Roman and middle Byzantine periods and, in conjunction with a few scattered figures in the medieval sources, attempts to extrapolate therefrom exact figures for the military budget of the empire at certain key moments (fifth and sixth centuries, ninth century, eleventh century). The attempt has not met with general acceptance. While the book contributes little to the discussion of the army in society, the debate on finances and numbers of which it is part continues, and in this respect is worth reading.[22] In contrast, in his study of Byzantine military unrest published in 1981, Walter E. Kaegi essayed a survey of the history of Byzantine military intervention in 'politics' in the broadest sense, relating the rebellions and mutinies of the armies at different times over the period from the fifth to the ninth century to their conditions of service, the wider political and social situation within the empire, and to the relations pertaining between the East Roman state and its neighbours. Although there are criticisms to be made, this was, and remains, a pioneering work which has contributed a great deal to raising the profile of the study of the Byzantine army in its social and political context.[23]

In the same year as Treadgold's volume appeared, Eric McGeer published a new and important edition, with English translation and critical commentary, of the *Praecepta* of Nikephoros II, first published in 1909 by Kulakovskij.[24] The book presents an analysis of the Byzantine army in the 10th century, examines the evolution of tactics in the Byzantine armies from the 9th century onward, the fiscal basis for military service and recruitment, the weaponry and technology of Byzantine armies of the period, and the strategic development of imperial policy from the ninth century. It also presents an excellent analysis and account of the empire's chief enemies in the east, while the importance of military expansionism at this period for the growth and consolidation of a relatively new magnate elite, which came to dominate the provincial and Constantinopolitan military administration, is also discussed.

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22   Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and its army, 284-1081* (Stanford, Ca., 1995); cf. J.-Cl. Cheynet, 'Les effectifs de l'armée Byzantine aux Xe-XIIe s.', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévales* 38 (1995) 319-335 (repr. in *idem, The Byzantine aristocracy and its military function* [Aldershot 2006]).

23   Walter E. Kaegi, Jr., *Byzantine military unrest 471-843: an interpretation* (Amsterdam, 1981); and my review in *Byzantinoslavica* 44 (1983) 54-57.

24   McGeer, Eric, *Sowing the dragon's teeth. Byzantine warfare in the tenth century*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXIII (Washington DC 1995).

McGeer's excellent analysis provides a clear, concise and up-to-date picture of Byzantine military organization and effectiveness at this period.[25]

In 1999 the present writer published a volume which addressed the issue of warfare and society directly, and which presents so far the only synthesis in any language of the history of Byzantine military institutions and warfare across the whole period up to 1204, ending where Bartusis begins. The work is concerned with all aspects of imperial military history, but concentrates on social-cultural, administrative and institutional evolution, the ways in which the empire assessed, collected and consumed resources in manpower and materials to support its armies, and how this affected social relations as well as cultural attitudes and behaviour. Within this framework, the book examines the evolution of the imperial forces from the sixth century, through the great transformation of the seventh and eighth centuries, up to the twelfth century, concentrating in particular on the metamorphosis of institutions, the evolution of strategy and tactics across the period as a whole, and the financing, recruitment and internal tactical administration of such units. In general terms the book underlines the relative lack of uniformity of structures and administrative arrangements which characterises the Byzantine armies of the period. It also emphasises lower numbers for units and divisions, arguing that the logistical base and the nature of communications and transport was insufficient to support the much larger forces which some figures derived from the sources might appear to suggest. Beginning with a discussion of attitudes to warfare, the question of 'holy war' and the relationship between Byzantine Christianity, concepts of empire, and warfare, the book examines development of strategy across the whole period in the context of the changing priorities of the imperial government, including a chapter on the strategic geography of the empire. There follow chapters dealing with the administration of tactical structures – units, divisions, pay and conditions of service and related matters – the fiscal, administrative and logistical arrangements which evolved to support campaigning, the army in battle, including weapons, tactics and morale, the effects of warfare on Byzantine culture, and the social origins and role of soldiers as individuals in the society of the Byzantine world.

In 1997 a conference held in Athens on 'Byzantium at War' resulted in a collective volume edited by N. Oikonomides, which offers insights into a range of related topics, with chapters by thirteen scholars on different facets of imperial military organization, attitudes to fighting and relations with the empire's enemies.[26] The relationship between landholding, recruitment and the maintenance of the field armies, the logistics of field expeditions, tactical and battlefield structures in theory and practice, the assessment of the field strength of the forces before battle, siege warfare, concepts of fighting and bravery, military intelligence, diplomacy and related issues are all examined, providing excellent insights into the warfare and attitudes to warfare in the period from the ninth to twelfth century. There emerges a picture of a dynamic and responsive military organization which was both flexible but which at the same time represented a particular reservoir of ideological attitudes and preconceptions which determined how Byzantines responded to external threat, and which evolved as society evolved to reflect the changes in the social and economic structures of the empire. Finally, in 2001 John Birkenmeier's book on the army of the Komnenian period – one area which

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25   McGeer's volume, and Haldon's *Byzantine Praetorians*, are complemented by the useful but somewhat derivative monograph by H.-J. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee im 10. Jahrhundert* (Vienna 1991).

26   N. Oikonomides, ed., *To empolemo Byzantio (Byzantium at war)* (Athens 1997).

had hitherto received no monographic treatment, although scholars who had written on the Komnenoi had devoted some limited space to its military institutions and administration and to the role of the army in society[27] – filled an important gap.[28]

Two very different fields of interest have also generated specialist articles in recent years. The subject of Byzantine attitudes to warfare and violence has proved especially fruitful, given the paradox of a nominally pacific or at least pacifistic Christian culture and its struggle to survive in a hostile political and ideological environment. A useful collective volume was published in 1995, in which a range of articles took up issues such as Byzantine notions of just or holy war, attitudes to killing, the role of the clergy in the army, and so forth,[29] while the whole issue of whether Byzantine culture evolved a notion of holy war had already been taken up in the careful analysis of A. Kolia-Dermitzaki. Although her conclusions have not met with general acceptance, the book stimulated an important discussion which continues today.[30] In contrast, study of Byzantine weaponry and military technology has lagged, chiefly because of the almost complete absence of archaeological material, although some work – see essays IV, 1 and 2 below – has been done in recent years, and the excellent analysis of the available written sources by Kolias has moved this area forward very considerably.[31] Finally, that most crucial of organizational aspects for warfare, the allocation and distribution of resources, logistics, has recently received a growing amount of attention, a subject which necessarily re-integrates the study of military structures with that of the general economic organization of society and state at large.[32] The study of Byzantine and late Roman warfare and military organization still has a considerable way to go before it begins to catch up with similar work done on the Roman

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27   See, for example, A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Komnenen* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 1. Munich, 1965).

28   J. W. Birkenmeier, *The development of the Comnenian army* (Leiden 2001).

29   T. S. Miller and J. Nesbitt, eds., *Peace and war in Byzantium* (Washington D.C. 1995).

30   A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, *Byzantine "Holy War": the concept and evolution of religious warfare in Byzantium* (in Greek) (Athens 1991); *eadem*, 'Byzantium at war in sermons and letters of the 10th and 11th centuries. An ideological approach', in Oikonomidès, ed., *To empolemo Byzantio*, 213-38. See essays I, 2 and I, 3 in this collection.

31   T. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen* (Byzantina Vindobonensia, XVII. Vienna 1988), which includes all the older literature up to that point. For recent discussion see the material cited in essays IV, 1 and 2, below; and, inter al., G. Breccia, 'L'arco e la spada. Procopio e il nuovo esercito bizantino', *Nea Romê. Rivista di ricerche bizantinistiche* 1 (2004), 73-99 (and see also V. P. Nikonov, 'Cataphracti, catafractarii and clibanarii: another look at the old problem of their identifiation', in *Military archaeology. Weaponry and warfare in the historical and social perspective* (International congress, Sankt Peterburg 1998), 131-138. There are a number of associated technical issues, also, where a great deal of work remains to be done – for example, on Byzantine artillery and missile weapons – see D. F. Sullivan, *Siegecraft. Two tenth-century instructional manuals by 'Heron of Byzantium'* (Washington D.C., 2000); or the introduction and role of the stirrup – see S. Lazaris, 'Considérations sur l'apparition de l'étrier: contribution à l'histoire du cheval dans 'Antiquité tardive', in A. Gardeisen, ed., *Les équidés dans le monde méditerranéen antique* (Lattes 2005), 275-288; quite apart from more obscure matters, such as the form and origins of 'liquid fire' - for a recent review of the evidence and discussion for this weapon, see J.F. Haldon, ' "Greek fire" revisited: recent and current research', in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Byzantine style, religion, and civlization: in honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge 2006), 290-325; and J. Pryor and E. Jeffreys, *The age of the* Dromon. *The Byzantine navy ca 500-1204* (Leiden-Boston 2006), 607-631.

32   See the essays in section V below; and J. F. Haldon, ed., *General issues in the study of medieval logistics: sources, problems and methodologies* (Leiden 2006); *idem*, 'La logistique de Mantzikert: quelques problèmes

and Hellenistic periods.[33] Apart from the relevant chapters or sections in the military treatises of the sixth and tenth centuries already alluded to, there are some important texts which touch on this area, and which have now begun to receive the attention they merit – notably the short treatises on imperial expeditionary forces compiled in the tenth century, some of the material dating to the ninth century or possibly earlier; and the well-known but extremely problematic accountants' lists of men and equipment for the expeditions to north Syria in 910–911 and to Crete in 949.[34] It is perhaps in this area that there is the greatest scope for comparison between late Roman and Byzantine traditions of military administration, tactics and strategy, as well as the social and political role of 'the military' and of soldiers or warriors more broadly, and those of neighbouring societies and cultures. Again, very little has been done in this area, although it is a potentially rich field of enquiry.[35]

One area relevant to this general theme which this volume will not address is that of the history of the empire's naval organization, of warfare at sea, and of marine technology, partly because many of the associated organizational issues are taken up in the literature on military organization in general, and partly because very little specific to the subject has appeared in reproducible article form. This does not mean that the area has been neglected. Quite the contrary – a number of substantial works have appeared, ranging from the monographs by Ahrweiler and Antoniadis-Bibicou in the 1960s[36] to that of Eickhoff or Christides.[37] Most recently, the whole question of Byzantine marine technology and warfare has been studied in depth, in many respects with radical new conclusions, by Jeffreys and Pryor.[38] This is an area that in many respects now requires a volume to itself.

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d'appprovisionnement au XI/e siècle', in D. Barthelemy and J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Guerre et société (IXe-XIIIe siècle)* (Paris 2007).

33   See, for example, D. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the logistics of the Macedonian army* (Berkeley, 1978); P. Roth, *The logistics of the Roman army at war (264 B.C.-A.D. 235)* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne 1999); P. Erdkamp, ed., *The Roman army and the economy* (Amsterdam 2002); *idem, Hunger and the sword. Warfare and food supply in Roman republican wars (264-30 B.C.)* (Amsterdam 1998).

34   See J. F. Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Three treatises on imperial military expeditions.* Introduction, text, translation, commentary (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, vol. 28. Vienna 1990/repr. 1996); and *idem*, 'Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the *Book of Ceremonies.* Theory and practice in tenth-century military administration', *Travaux et Mémoires* 13 (Paris 2000) 201-352.

35   See the review articles by France, Carrié and Janniard in n. 1, above; and cf. for example – from a very extensive literature – the important contributions of H. Kennedy, *The armies of the Caliphs: military and society in the early Islamic state* (London 2005); and G. Halsall, *Warfare and society in the barbarian west, 450-900* (London 2003). Two volumes by D. Nicolle, *Medieval warfare source book, 1: Warfare in western Christendom* (London 1995); and *Medieval warfare source book, 2: Christian Europe and its neighbours* (London 1996), offer a useful starting point from the technological and organizational standpoint.

36   See n. 16 above

37   For Eickhoff, see n. 16 above; and see V. Christides, *The conquest of Crete by the Arabs (ca. 824). A turning point in the struggle between Byzantium and Islam* (Athens 1984); also the important contribution of J. Pryor, *Geography, technology and war. Studies in the maritime history of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge 1988). See also A.R. Lewis, *Naval power and trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500 to 1100* (Princeton 1951). On tactical organizational aspects, see C.G. Makrypoulias, 'The navy in the works of Constantine Porphyrogenitus', *Graeco-Arabica* 6 (1995) 152-171.

38   Pryor and Jeffreys, *The age of the Dromon* (n. 31 above).

Byzantium was in many ways constantly at war, for it always had an enemy or a potential enemy on one front or another. This fundamental and unavoidable feature of the empire's existence necessarily inflected its whole history and determined in part at least its social structure and the way in which the state as well as the political system could evolve. Defence was the primary concern of Byzantine rulers and generals. Byzantine military dispositions were necessarily defensive in orientation, a point noted quite clearly by a mid-tenth-century visitor from Italy, the Ambassador Liutprand of Cremona, in respect of the precautions taken to secure Constantinople at night.[39] The emphasis placed by Byzantine writers and governments on effective diplomacy is not merely an issue of cultural preference informed by a Christian distaste for the shedding of blood – on the contrary, the continued existence of the state depended upon the deployment of a sophisticated diplomatic arsenal, as the history of Byzantine foreign relations, as well as the theory and practice of Byzantine diplomacy, demonstrate. Diplomacy had a significant military aspect as well. Good relations with the peoples of the western Eurasian steppe were essential to Byzantine interests in the Balkans and Caucasus, because they could also serve as a weapon that might be turned on the enemies of the empire. Such contacts were also a source of information, and considerable efforts were put into the gathering of intelligence which might be relevant to the empire's defence.

Eastern Roman generals and rulers were generally fully aware of the relationship between the allocation and redistribution of resources – soldiers, supplies, equipment, livestock and so forth – and the ability of the empire to ward off hostile military action or to strike back at its enemies. Logistical resources were administered upon a consistent and well-considered basis. Military handbooks and treatises dating from the sixth to eleventh centuries make it apparent that the imbalance in resources between Byzantium and its enemies was recognised. Commanders of armies in the field were exhorted not to give battle in unfavourable conditions, because this might lead to waste of life and resources. The dominant motif in these works is that it was the Byzantines who were compelled to manoeuvre, to use delaying tactics, to employ ambushes and other strategems to even the odds stacked against them, and that it was quite clearly a main war aim to win without having to fight a decisive battle. Victory could be achieved through a combination of delaying tactics, intelligent exploitation of enemy weaknesses, the landscape, seasonal factors, and diplomacy. Wars were costly, and for a state whose basic income derived from agricultural production, and which remained relatively stable as well as being vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters, they were to be avoided if at all possible.

Manpower was a vital consideration in imperial strategic thinking. From the Byzantine perspective the empire was always outnumbered, and strategy as well as diplomacy needed to take this factor into account in dealing with enemies. One way of evening the balance was to reduce enemy numbers: delay the enemy forces until they could no longer stay in the field, destroying or removing any possible sources of provisions and supplies, for example, misleading them with false information about Byzantine intentions – these are all methods which the military treatises recommend. Avoiding battle, which was a keystone of Byzantine

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39   Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, I, 11 (p. 9); trans. *Liudprand of Cremona, Works*, trans. F.A.Wright (London 1930), 38. For the points that follow, see the more detailed discussion in Haldon, *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world*, with sources and modern literature.

strategy, would also increase the possibility that the enemy host might be struck by illness, or run out of water and supplies.

Going to war was in consequence rarely the result of a planned choice made by emperors or their advisers, for the empire was perpetually threatened from one quarter or another, and was thus in a constant state of military preparedness. The difference between war and peace in the frontier areas became a matter of the part of the empire in which one found oneself, rather than of the state of the empire as a whole in relation to its neighbours. Recovery of former territories was permanently on the ideological agenda, but efforts to implement such a policy reflected responses to unforeseen advantages gained through victories in battle and the exploitation of favourable circumstances. The actual potential for the reconquest and restoration of lost territories was severely limited. Strategy was determined by the interplay between resources and political beliefs, inflected by ideological pragmatism: most Byzantine warfare was fought not on the basis of delivering a knock-out blow to the enemy, but on that of attempting to reach or maintain a state of parity or equilibrium, though attrition, raid and counter-raid, and destruction of the enemy's short-term potential. Members of the government and imperial court may have shared common ideals in respect of their relations with the outside world, but the strategic dispositions of the armies of the later Roman and Byzantine empire were not necessarily arranged with these concerns as a priority.

Resources were a key element in strategic thinking, for obvious reasons – armies cannot fight without adequate supplies, equipment, training and shelter. But warfare was not necessarily conducted with a purely material advantage in mind, since ideological superiority played an important role in Byzantine notions of their own identity and role in the order of things. Nor was warfare conducted with any longer-term strategic objective in mind, although a generally-accepted, if somewhat vague vision of the future held that the Christian Roman empire, as God's chosen people on earth, was destined eventually to overcome its enemies immediately before the Second Coming. Any damage to the enemy was a good thing, but some ways of hitting the enemy also carried an ideological value – strategically wasteful attacks against symbolically important enemy fortresses or towns were carried out by all medieval rulers at one time or another, since the short-term propaganda value, associated perhaps also with a raising of morale, was often considered as valuable as any real material gains. By the same token, some theatres were ideologically more important than others. Fighting the barbarians in the Balkans and north of the Danube was regarded as much less prestigious and glorious than combating the religious foe, the Muslims in the East.

Warfare was not conducted to gain resources that could then be deployed in a coherent way to further a given strategy, except in the sense that more territory and the wealth that usually accompanied it were desirable in themselves. Rather, the infliction of maximum damage to the enemy's economy and material infrastructure were clear immediate aims – enslavement or killing of populations, destruction of fortifications and urban installations, devastation of the countryside. By the same token, measures to protect one's own side had to be taken, and by the middle of the tenth century both aspects of such warfare had been developed to a high degree. But this is not to suggest that there was never a longer-term strategic aim or ulterior motive at issue – the case of the accelerated eastward expansion in the tenth century and in the slightly later, but closely related conquest of Bulgaria under Basil II, are cases in point. In the first case, through an aggressive imperialism towards the minor Muslim powers in Syria and Jazîra, the extension and consolidation of the empire's territorial strength in the area

was clearly an important consideration; in the second case, and partly stimulated by the first development, the creation of a new resource-base for the emperors and Constantinopolitan government, independent of the power and influence of the eastern magnates, was a significant consideration; but it was also in the context of an equally practical decision to eradicate the threat from an independent Bulgaria and re-assert imperial dominance throughout the Balkan regions. Both facets of these processes reflect specific structural tensions within the Byzantine state, and at the same time they also demonstrate particularly clearly the extent to which the foreign policies and military strategy of a state can reflect power relations within the society as a whole.

Warfare for ideological reasons alone was very rare. Clearly, all defensive warfare could be justified on a range of such grounds – the threat to the empire's territory and population, the challenge to Orthodox rule and God's appointed ruler, the emperor at Constantinople, challenges to Roman sovereignty, and so forth. Offensive or aggressive warfare was, in the Christian Roman empire, a little more difficult to justify, but it was readily accomplished. But Byzantium survived as long as it did because it was able to raise and efficiently manage the resources necessary to defend itself effectively, intelligently exploit natural frontiers or boundaries in the crisis years of the seventh and eighth centuries, and exploit diplomatic and political relationships thereafter. And whatever the specific details of the process of its political-historical withering away after 1204, the gradual demise of the empire went hand-in-hand with its declining ability to muster the resources necessary to defend itself. Strategy was, in practical terms, a matter of pragmatic reaction to events in the world around the empire, only loosely informed by the political-ideological imperatives of the Christian Roman empire. In this respect, the political and strategic conditions of existence of the East Roman or Byzantine state rendered a grand strategy in the narrower sense irrelevant – the strategy of the empire was based on maintaining the conditions appropriate to political, cultural and ideological survival.

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The contributions to this volume have been organised under seven major headings, partly in order to bring problems and source materials of a similar nature together – this is merely a convenience for the present volume and alternatives could be argued. They were selected on the basis of three criteria, although the choice was not always easy: there are many more essays worthy of inclusion, which had to be omitted because of constraints on space. These criteria were: 1 whether an article made a substantial contribution to the debate in respect of challenging or verifying hitherto unproven or problematic assumptions, 2 whether or not it asked new questions of older material and suggested new ways of approaches to key questions, and 3 whether it offered useful surveys of a particular debate and provided those readers who might be unfamiliar with key aspects of Byzantine warfare and its social and cultural context with reasonable access to the major topics.

Part I deals with ideas and attitudes to warfare, is prefaced by Miller's excellent short survey of the topic and the relevant literature (Chapter 1), and offers a useful guide to the major issues. The three essays which follow each take up a particular theme, although all focus on how exactly we can define the notion of 'holy war', and the extent to which it can

be found in Byzantium. All contributions make the point that there was never an explicit and acknowledged concept of holy war in the Byzantine world, yet at the same time, that warfare was justified on the grounds of defending the orthodox faith, the Christian Roman empire and its God-appointed rulers. Implicitly, therefore, and in the sense that Byzantine warfare was waged, at least in theory, to defend orthodoxy and not for reasons of mere aggression or expansionism (even if the reality was often very different), it was by definition sanctified, since it served God's chosen people, the Christian, Roman empire, understood in the Byzantine eschatological and apocalyptic literature as Christ's empire, an empire which would ultimately be victorious over its earthly enemies, before the Second Coming.

Part II deals with financing armed forces and recruitment. This is a complex area, dependent in part on a series of often obscure technical documents, and one which has been the focus of a great deal of attention, since it was to certain reforms attributed to the Emperor Heraclius that the salvation of the empire was ascribed by many scholars writing in the period before the 1950s and in some cases until much more recently. Rather than repeat the debate, however, I have chosen here to reproduce a series of essays, which more or less encapsulate contemporary ideas on these subjects and will provide readers with both the background literature to the earlier discussions as well as concise analyses and accounts of the relevant sources and the ways in which the evidence can be interpreted. Study of military financing and warfare inevitably goes hand-in-hand with study of state finance and the economy in general, so it is not surprising that these articles also reflect substantial advances in our understanding of the military aspects as our knowledge and appreciation of state taxation and resource-management has improved. Three key developments stand out: first, that the development of the so-called 'military lands' of the middle Byzantine period was probably a long and patchy process which did not reach maturity until the later ninth century, by which time it was already becoming obsolete in terms of the needs of the state – Haldon (Chapter 5), with a somewhat divergent argument in Oikonomides (Chapter 6); second, that the government tried to deal with issues of control over resources and manpower by introducing what amounted in effect to a 'privatization' by the imperial government of fiscal lands, in order to protect the tax-base from the incursions of the political and social elite; and third, that the attribution of fiscal revenues, whether on a large or a small scale, should not be understood as a process of 'feudalisation' in the simple sense of an abandonment of central authority, but on the contrary as a carefully-monitored, although easily-abused, means of exploiting the available resources in revenues and manpower to maintain military effectiveness in the provinces – Magdalino (Chapter 7).

Part III addresses issues of tactics and strategic organization, and the contributions generally show how Byzantine defensive strategy evolved a permeable frontier that could soak up enemy resources while allowing the defenders to regroup and deal with invaders on ground chosen by Byzantine generals – Kaegi (Chapter 10), Obolensky (Chapter 13), and Arvites (Chapter 14). The aggressive expansionism of the later tenth century changed this, but at the same time resulted in a substantial change in tactical structures, with consequences for both finance and the command structure of the older 'thematic' system – McGeer (Chapter 15), McGrath (Chapter 16) and Kaegi (Chapters 11 and 12). Associated thematically with these contributions, Part IV, dealing with weapons and armour, illustrates both the limitations of the evidence – very little archaeology, in comparison with either the preceding Roman period or the medieval west – as well as the relative flexibility of Byzantine military culture in the face

of new techniques and innovations from outside the empire, especially the Eurasian steppe zone.

Part V takes up a range of issues that have only recently found favour in discussions about either Byzantine or ancient and medieval warfare. The extraction, distribution and consumption of resources for waging war, both in respect of manpower as well as livestock, food, water and so forth, is a crucial, indeed determining factor in the outcome of war. Evidence for Byzantine logistical arrangements is sufficient to reveal a sophisticated and relatively efficient system, the existence of which goes some way toward explaining the empire's survival, against the odds in many respects, in the crisis period from the middle of the seventh century to the middle or later eighth century – Haldon (Chapter 20) and Kaegi (Chapter 19) – and which also accounts for its resilience at a later period, when it was strategically as well as economically at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with its Balkan and Anatolian neighbours.

Part VI deals with fortifications and siege warfare – a subject on which the literature is still very limited, again largely a reflection of a lack of sufficient archaeological data, although the bringing together and analysis of the vast amount of scattered archaeological information from many reports for sites across the late Roman and Byzantine worlds is certainly a desideratum. A few monographs have appeared on the subject, and a number of technical essays in archaeological journals, but I have chosen here to reproduce two contributions that look at the problem of siege warfare, rather than the material evidence for fortifications as such, through the eyes of Byzantine texts.[40]

And finally, Part VII, deals again with a relatively under-discussed subject, namely the role of spies, on the one hand and – because the two were often assumed to overlap, and certainly did so on many occasions – prisoners-of-war. Byzantine attitudes to prisoners-of-war varied very much according to context, as we might expect, and pragmatism founded on a broadly philanthropic approach to captives was the norm. In theory prisoners were to be treated honourably, although in practice this depended very much on the exigencies of the moment. Prisoners were regularly exchanged with both Balkan and eastern enemy powers, yet massacres of prisoners were also not unusual, sometimes intended as an especially pointed warning or threat to an enemy, sometimes because of circumstances – the need to move quickly and to avoid burdening one's own forces with additional mouths to feed, for example.[41] Prisoners also played a role in ceremonial, of course, representing a tangible symbol of imperial victory and enemy defeat – Simeonova (Chapter 25). Spies represented, in contrast, a more complicated issue. Byzantine military treatises speak of spies as a regular, usual and entirely necessary aspect of warmaking, but were also keenly aware of the dangers of spies in one's own camp – whether traitors, or prisoners who had deliberately surrendered in order to gather intelligence, or passing merchants. While the information to be gleaned from the sources is not particularly full, enough evidence can be extracted to give some idea of how

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40    For an introduction, see C. Foss and D. Winfield, *Byzantine fortifications* (Pretoria 1986); and the comments in M. Whittow, 'Rural fortifications in western Europe and Byzantium, tenth to twelfth century', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995) 57-74.

41    S. Patoura, *Prisoners of war as agents of communication and information* (Athens 1994) (in Greek); and A. Kazhdan et al., eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford-New York 1991), art. 'Prisoners of war', 1722-1723.

spies were employed and how they were regarded and treated at certain periods – Koutrakou (Chapter 24).[42]

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Byzantium made war against its enemies over a period of some 700 years, from the seventh to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In this sense, we might also assert that war made Byzantium what it was. The essays collected in this volume represent work over the last twenty five or so years on many of the key aspects of Byzantine warfare, and will offer the reader a way into some of the most important areas of the study of Byzantium. The study of the Byzantine military, of warfare and of organising for war, in all their complexity, can only be properly understood in the context of Byzantine culture, society and economy as a whole, and it is hoped that the essays that follow will provide the reader with an adequate introduction.

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42    See Haldon, *Warfare and society in the Byzantine world*, ch. 7.

# Part I
# Ideas and Attitudes to Warfare

# [1]

# Introduction

TIMOTHY S. MILLER

How Byzantine society—government, church, and individuals—viewed the violence of warfare and the blessings of peace is a fascinating issue for professional Byzantinists who are always interested in learning more about the sophisticated civilization they have been studying. It is, however, also a pressing question for anyone who is seriously concerned about the human condition in general, for anyone who is profoundly troubled about the dangers of armed conflicts and the many threats to peace in the modern world. A study of Byzantine views on war and peace offers a different moral perspective on the problem of organized violence and may, in fact, provide valuable new insights on this century's greatest problem—preserving peace.

Pursuing a serious study of Byzantine attitudes toward peace and war is especially useful to Western Europeans and Americans because Byzantine civilization represents a culture distinct from our own Latin-based Western tradition, yet close enough to us to offer many points of common reference. Like the societies of Western Europe and America, Byzantine civilization was based on the Greek intellectual achievement, the Roman legal and governmental structure, and the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, yet it evolved into a society very different from that of the West.[1]

During the twentieth century the countries of the West have experienced such catastrophic wars that they have nearly destroyed

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1. George Ostrogorsky listed the constituent elements of Byzantine civilization in the opening sentence of his famous textbook, Ostrogorsky, *History*, 27: "Roman political concepts, Greek culture, and Christian faith were the main elements which determined Byzantine development. Without all three the Byzantine way of life would have been inconceivable."

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themselves. At the same time, their Western culture has spread
to every corner of the world, and though it has not totally eradi-
cated native civilizations, it has established a universal culture of
trade, commerce, and political concepts. This Western culture has
been remarkably successful both in evolving open, democratic
forms of government and in shaping a dynamic and productive
economic system. These blessings of Western culture have in part
been responsible for its spread throughout the world. At the same
time, however, the West has been plagued by a tradition of vio-
lence, which in the twentieth century has reached horrific propor-
tions.

No issue has haunted twentieth-century, Western society as
much as the question of war and peace. From 1914 to 1918 Eu-
rope endured a holocaust of death and destruction unparalleled in
human history. This first world conflict was followed by another
war, fought on an even grander scale, a war which only the horror
of two nuclear explosions finally brought to an end. Since the close
of World War II, the fear of nuclear weapons has maintained an
uneasy peace between the major military powers, the Soviet Union
and the United States, but it has not prevented innumerable smaller
conflicts from flaring up. Although the end of the Cold War has
relieved anxieties over a world-wide nuclear conflict, fears con-
cerning these smaller wars that could involve atomic weapons have
actually increased. As nuclear weapons become easier to manu-
facture, the danger grows that any one of these regional disputes
could produce a nuclear explosion far greater than those that de-
stroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

At the same time that warfare has become destructive on a scale
previously inconceivable, the threats to world peace and stability
have multiplied. World War I not only demonstrated the horrors
of modern warfare, but it also initiated a period of political insta-
bility that gave birth to new forms of political oppression. First in
Russia, then in Germany, totalitarian regimes seized control of
their respective peoples.[2] These governments not only tried to re-
press political opposition as many authoritarian rulers had done
previously, but they sought to control all aspects of social, eco-
nomic, and intellectual life. In short, they strove to crush all forms
of social intercourse, and leave the individual—stripped of all spir-

2. Weigel, *Tranquillitas Ordinis,* 5–16.

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itual, intellectual, social, or economic independence—a pliant tool of the all-powerful state.

Whether using rightist or leftist propaganda, these totalitarian states have raised a new danger to human welfare. Their very existence challenges any simplistic answer to the problems posed by the horrors of modern warfare. When such regimes come to power, they often threaten to expand their control over neighboring states. In such a situation is it proper to retreat into pacifism, to abstain from the violence of war and allow millions to fall under the control of violent political systems? The world has faced this dilemma during most of the twentieth century.[3]

Caught in this precarious position, Western intellectuals and political leaders have sought moral guidelines for deciding when indeed war can be justly undertaken. Two of the strongest moral voices of the West, the Catholic and Protestant churches, derive their views regarding the just war from two key medieval thinkers, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.[4] Both of these men lie securely within the intellectual tradition of Latin Christian culture, the same tradition that gave birth to the modern West. Turning to the Byzantine discussion of war and peace reveals an entirely different group of religious thinkers and moralists—Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom to mention only a few. In view of the seriousness of the issue before us and the West's failure during this century to steer a peaceful course, it seems imperative to consider the issue of war and peace from a new direction, through the perspective of Byzantium.

To introduce this present study on war and peace in Byzantium, it is useful, first, to consider briefly the official Byzantine view of warfare and to contrast this with the attitudes of medieval Western society concerning armed combat. Second, a brief summary of early Christian concepts regarding peace and the morality of war and of the profession of arms will aid in placing Byzantine moral values in the proper context. Finally, an overview of the articles in this volume will underscore the significance of the specific issues discussed herein as well as indicate areas that still await careful research.

3. Ibid., 3–21. Weigel's prologue is the source of much of my thoughts on the dilemma of the twentieth-century West.

4. Ibid., 25–45. See also Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, xv–xxiv, 15–33.

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I

The Byzantine empire, more than most other societies, de-
pended for its very existence on successfully waging war, some-
times on three different fronts at the same time. The empire
constantly faced attack from barbarians to the North, from Per-
sian, Arab, and Turkish armies to the East, and by the end of the
eleventh century, from Normans and crusaders to the West.[5] De-
spite the importance of warfare to its survival, Byzantine society
never glorified combat as did the medieval civilization of Western
Europe.

The emperor Leo VI (886–912) elegantly stated the official Byz-
antine position concerning war in the introduction to his popular
manual on the military arts. According to Leo, human beings are
by nature peaceful. They naturally cherish their own safety, and if
given the opportunity, they embrace peace as their proper way of
life. This Byzantine concept of human nature is remarkably opti-
mistic when one recalls Thomas Hobbes' view of the natural
state—the war of all against all, a nightmare that only the absolute
power of the sovereign can dispel. According to Leo, war exists
because the devil has used sin to stir human beings to violence
against their own self interest. The devil takes joy in killing us,
and thus he has led some to use murderous weapons against oth-
ers. The Byzantine empire was therefore justified in taking up arms
to defend itself against those who were doing the work of the evil
one.

Leo VI thus maintained that warfare was the devil's work. A
Christian emperor could legitimately undertake a war only against
those who had fallen under the spell of the evil one and had been
incited to invade imperial territory. With God's blessing the em-
peror and his troops repelled such invaders. If the barbarians re-
mained within their own territories, however, it was not right to
begin an offensive war against them. A good emperor was to avoid
not only spilling the blood of Christian subjects, but also uselessly
shedding the blood of barbarians.[6]

Leo's justification of warfare appears in a genre of Byzantine

5. Ahrweiler, *Idéologie politique, passim,* esp. 67–74.
6. *Leonis imperatoris tactica,* PG 107:672–73.

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literature of great interest to military historians, but also valuable to those concerned with the moral question of war. These are the several *strategika,* handbooks on strategy and tactics for combat. Byzantine military experts composed these practical manuals in imitation of similar works from the Classical Greek world. Frequently they copied whole sections from ancient manuals and then added specific details based on their personal experience. *The Strategikon of Maurice,* written in the sixth century (see the edition and translation by George Dennis), is primarily an original work; most of the discussion is based on the author's personal experiences against the Persians in the East and against Slavs, Avars, and Huns in the Balkans. The tenth-century compilation of Leo VI, on the other hand, was composed primarily by paraphrasing ancient sources, including Maurice's *Strategikon,* but it also contains original sections, including the introduction discussed above.[7]

These *strategika* show that Byzantine military men classed warfare as an art, as a technical skill that required careful study as did any other endeavor useful for the common welfare. According to the authors of the *strategika,* military science was the most important skill within society, not because war was a noble enterprise—one sixth-century strategist called it the worst of all evils—but because it preserved the state from its enemies.[8] Soldiers and their officers thus practiced an art, critical to society's survival, but in essence an art or useful profession similar to what other experts, such as grammarians, physicians, judges, or farmers, did.[9]

This Byzantine view of the warrior contrasts sharply with the vision of knightly nobility that emerged in the West by the beginning of the eleventh century. Germanic society had developed a warrior elite as early as the period of the Marcomanni wars (second century).[10] The subsequent barbarian kings attempted to harness these warriors in the service of their states by using Christian concepts of both temporal and spiritual order. Charlemagne, the most successful of the barbarian kings, managed to control his

7. For a survey of Byzantine *strategika,* see Hunger, *Hochsprachliche profane Literatur,* 2:321–38. See also Dain, "Stratégistes byzantins," 317–92.

8. Anonymous *strategikon* chap. 4, Dennis, ed., *Three Byzantine Military Treatises,* 20–21.

9. Ibid., chaps. 3 and 4 (pp. 14–21).

10. For the profound changes the Marcomanni wars worked upon the Germanic tribes, see Geary, *Before France and Germany,* 39–75.

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unruly warriors and to establish a short-lived Germanic-Latin em-
pire, modeled on Byzantium.

After Charlemagne's death, however, the forces of disorder dis-
solved that empire within a few generations into hundreds of castle
baronies, tiny principalities ruled by the local baron from his
castle, but the baron's might rested not only on the strength of his
castle's walls, but also upon the prowess and loyalty of his
mounted warriors. By the eleventh century these warriors had co-
alesced into a powerful class within Western society. Political theo-
reticians began to talk of three orders in society: those who prayed
(the bishops and their clergy), those who fought (the new knightly
nobility), and those who worked (the peasants). These divisions
gradually took on the qualities of a caste system.[11] Western society
came to see the very *raison d'être* of its lay nobility as the use of
arms. Whether repelling Viking raiders, conquering neighboring
barons, or pillaging the local peasants, knights behaved nobly by
the very act of wielding the sword.[12]

With great difficulty the Western Church managed to circum-
scribe the scope of knightly warfare by introducing proper seasons
for fighting and by stressing the need for knights to help the poor
and weak and to attack only the proud and haughty, but the
Church's most effective antidote to the endemic violence of West-
ern society was the crusading movement, in essence an appeal to
focus the violence on a new target—Moslems in Spain and the
Middle East—and a prayer to put aside bloodshed at home. Al-
though the Crusades helped to pacify western Europe, they also
served to heighten the warrior elite's conviction that war was a
noble and virtuous pursuit. It is interesting to note that the Byz-
antine empire never approved of the crusading movement as West-
erners envisioned it.

Aware of the perils of combat and of the potential loss of life,
even in victory, Byzantine military experts recommended against
open assaults on enemy forces. The sixth-century *Strategikon of
Maurice* advised, instead, that commanders use stealth and cun-
ning to trap the enemy. Just as a hunter used nets, careful stalking,
and ambushes, so too the wise commander employed stratagems,

11. Duby, *Three Orders,* 1–57, esp. 1–8. Duby alludes to the research of
George Dumézil, *Les dieux souverains des Indo-européens* (Paris, 1977) who sug-
gests that the three orders reflect a basic Indo-European caste structure.
12. Bloch, *Feudal Society,* 2: 293–311.

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not sheer force. According to the *Strategikon*, "Apart from extreme emergency, it is ridiculous to try to gain a victory which is so costly and brings only empty glory."[13]

The warrior nobility of the West developed a radically different view of how one should fight. The true knight never stooped to employing stratagems, but he plowed straight ahead into battle, heedless of the odds. Roland, the hero of the most famous eleventh-century *chanson du geste,* refused even to summon reinforcements by sounding his battle horn when he was surrounded by a huge enemy force. Such an act, Roland feared, would be seen as cowardly.[14]

Bertrand de Born, a troubadour of the supposedly more civilized twelfth century, expressed a sheer love for battle that is totally alien to the Byzantine world.

I love the gay Eastertide which brings forth leaves and flowers, and I love the joyous songs of birds. But also I love to see, amidst the meadows, tents and pavilions spread; . . . Maces, swords, helms of different hues, shields that will be riven and shattered as soon as the fight begins; and many vassals struck down together; and the horses of the dead and the wounded roving at random. And when battle is joined, let all men of good lineage think of naught but the breaking of heads and arms, for it is better to die than to be vanquished and live. I tell you, I find no such savour in food, or in wine, or in sleep, as in hearing the shout, "On! on!" from both sides . . . in seeing men great and small go down in the grass beyond the fosses; in seeing at last the dead, with pennoned stumps of lances still in their sides.[15]

Bertrand de Born's delight in the sheer death and destruction of battle is a significant key to understanding the bellicose nature of Western society. The knightly class—what came to be called chivalric society or the lay nobility—dominated feudal Europe from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Even when new economic and social forces changed the class structure of Europe during the Renaissance and Reformation, the nobility managed to retain its social dominance and its claim to leadership in waging war. Thus, as the sovereigns of early modern Europe began organizing paid, professional troops, first in fifteenth-century France and Spain,

13. Dennis, ed., Maurice, *Strategikon,* 230–31; English translation, George T. Dennis, *Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy* (Philadelphia, 1984), 65.

14. *Chanson de Roland,* lines 1049–1109, pp. 90–95.

15. Translated by L. A. Manyon, in Bloch, *Feudal Society,* 2: 293. Text edited by Appel, Lieder Bertrans von Born, no. 40.

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then in the countries of Germany, the nobles claimed the exclusive
right to serve as officers. Their views of chivalric conduct—of the
glory of warfare, the value of reckless bravery, and the need for
unquestioning loyalty—survived as the codes of honor in the
French, German, English, and Russian armies of the eighteenth
century.[16] (Although Russia had originally developed under Byz-
antine influence, its reforming Tsar Peter [1689–1725] had intro-
duced Western ideas especially into the army.)

The nobility not only dominated the officer corps of these ar-
mies, they also served as diplomatic representatives and often as
the sovereigns' principal advisers. Even after the French Revolution
broke their virtual monopoly on army commissions and key
public-service positions, their ideals lived on. There can be little
doubt that most officers serving in European armies on the eve of
World War I would have understood Roland's reluctance to sound
his battle trumpet but would have been shocked by the Byzantine
maxim to use cunning, not force, to thwart the enemy.

II

In a search to solve the twentieth-century dilemma posed by the
horrors of war, on the one hand, and by the brutality of unjust
political systems, on the other, theologians of both the Catholic
and the Protestant traditions have tried to return to the early Chris-
tian church to find guidance in the maxims of the New Testament
and in the post-apostolic writings. These scholars have focused on
the period before the coming of the Germanic tribes with their
warrior elite—the group whose traditions later gave birth to the
medieval caste of nobles—and before the conversion of the em-
peror Constantine, who forged perhaps too close a union between
the Roman state, including the army, and the Christian church.

The New Testament itself offers no clear guidance on the mo-
rality of war. At the moment He was arrested, Jesus did warn one
of His followers that "those who take up the sword, are destroyed
by the sword" (Mt 26.52). In the Gospel of Luke, on the other

16. With regard to the honor of officers see Karl Demeter, *The German Officer
Corps in Society and State*, trans. A. Malcolm (New York and Washington, 1965),
111–46. I would like to thank Dr. Norman Johnson of the History Department,
Salisbury State University, for his assistance with this section of the introduction.

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hand, John the Baptist told soldiers who questioned him that they should not oppress civilians and should be satisfied with their pay, but he did not demand that they abandon their military careers (Lk 3.14). Jesus, too, did not require soldiers He met to leave the army. In a story, again from Luke's Gospel, Jesus held up a Roman centurion as an example of faith for all Israel (Lk 7.9).

From the post-apostolic writings, too, no clear Christian view on the morality of war emerges.[17] In fact, Christian authors rarely discussed warfare. Moreover, what they did say presents no clear moral teaching. In his *Apologia* Tertullian (early third century) maintained that good Christians should be loyal to the empire because they shared with pagans the blessings of peace and stability that the Roman government had established. Tertullian claimed that loyalty included willingness to serve as a soldier. In some of his later writings, however, Tertullian opposed Christians in the Roman army. Clement of Alexandria (also early third century) found nothing objectionable in military service. The third-century Roman priest Hippolytos made the strongest assertion against Christians' serving in the Roman army. In his *Apostolic Tradition* he listed professions no catechumen or baptized Christian should practice. These included prostitution, astrology, jobs related to the gladiatorial games, idol production, and finally, military service.[18] Despite the objections of some Christian leaders such as Tertullian and Hippolytos, hagiographical sources as well as some inscriptions reveal that many Christians did in fact enroll in the Roman army. Moreover, archaeological work at Dura Europos has revealed a Christian church within a permanent military encampment, a church built under the Severan emperors (193–235), long before Constantine's conversion. The discovery of this church reveals, first, that a substantial number of Christian soldiers served along the Eastern frontier during the third century, and second, that the army command not only tolerated, but seems to have encouraged Christian worship among the troops.[19]

17. Modern scholars have often oversimplified the position of the early church. For example, Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, xv: "For almost two centuries of the history of the early church, Christians were universally pacifists."

18. Botte, ed., Hippolytus of Rome, *Tradition apostolique*, 72–74.

19. For references to the various works of Tertullian and of Clement of Alexandria, to hagiographical works, to inscriptional evidence, and to the church building found at Dura Europos, see Barzianò, "Cristianesimo delle origini," 440–50,

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Byzantine civilization evolved directly from Late Roman society. In fact, as every Byzantinist knows, the concept of a "Byzantine" empire is an historical myth to illustrate the important changes the Roman world experienced during the course of the fourth century. One should be aware that the Byzantine emperors always referred to themselves as Roman rulers, and their subjects proudly identified themselves as *Romaioi.*

The Byzantine church also evolved directly from the Christian tradition of the first three centuries of our era. Unlike the Christian communities of the West, however, East Roman (Byzantine) Christianity was not so profoundly affected by the barbarian invasions, and it never had to face the problems regarding church and state relations that were raised by the formation of new Germanic states. In many ways the history of eastern Christianity was far more tranquil with regard to political issues, at least until the onslaught of Islam in the seventh century.

Byzantine Christian concepts regarding warfare and the proper role of the state in the governance of human society flowed directly from the pre-Constantinian tradition. Moreover, the Eastern government readily responded to the spiritual guidance of church leaders in shaping its goals and adjusting its practices. Thus, the emperors claimed to reign in the name of Christ and considered it their duty to strive for the peace God had ordained for human beings. In many ways the Byzantine state used the political concepts worked out by early Christian and patristic thinkers as a blueprint for constructing what some East Roman intellectuals truly considered the New Jerusalem.[20]

In view of the direct link between later Byzantine civilization and the spiritual and secular traditions of the post-apostolic and patristic period of Christian history, it seems only natural to suggest that Byzantine opinions on the morality of warfare would shed additional light on the views held by earlier generations of Christians and show how certain seminal ideas evolved into more sophisticated theories concerning the morality of armed conflict. It is a fallacy of modern Western scholars to see Augustine of Hippo

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and also Helgaland, "Christians and the Roman Army," 149–63, and Swift, *Early Fathers.*

   20. *Theodori Prodromi oratio in honorem Alexii Aristeni,* PG 133:1271.

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as the only Christian intellectual to develop a theological frame-
work for addressing the question of warfare in a systematic
fashion.

III

Examining East Roman attitudes toward war and peace is an
immense field of study. At the present stage of Byzantine studies
it is impossible to address this subject directly. As yet, many works
of significant East Roman writers are still unedited. For example,
no complete edition of the many sermons and hymns of Andrew
of Crete, a major figure in the development of the Byzantine lit-
urgy, yet exists.[21] The works of many other Byzantine authors are
available only in editions that were hastily prepared without a
thorough study of manuscript traditions. Since the greater part of
both East Roman secular and sacred literature has not been trans-
lated into any modern Western language, only Byzantine special-
ists have been able to consider the ideas these works propound. So
far the works of even the most prominent Byzantine authors such
as Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom have not become part
of the modern intellectual tradition. Certainly they have no place
comparable with that of Augustine's *City of God*. This present
study, therefore, aims at a much more modest goal: simply to in-
troduce the Byzantine perspective—how the problems of waging
war effectively and of securing the peace were viewed from Con-
stantinople.

According to Byzantine official doctrine, enunciated clearly in
Leo VI's *Strategikon*, the emperor must always try to preserve the
peace. The first section of this study, therefore, will examine how
Byzantine society conceived of peace. Robert Taft opens the dis-
cussion with a careful examination of the meaning of peace in the
prayers of the Divine Liturgy, the central act of worship for Or-
thodox Christians. Patrick Viscuso follows with a review of how
Byzantine canonists interpreted Basil's canon thirteen, a rule
which, if understood as a binding law, would have banned all ac-
tive soldiers from participating in the Eucharist. Thomas Halton

21. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, 500–502.

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presents the views on peace and war found in the voluminous cor-
respondence of an influential fifth-century Egyptian monk, Isidore
of Pelusium. In analyzing how Byzantine rhetoricians conceived of
the ideal emperor, Joseph Munitiz argues that these professional
orators clung to a traditional Hellenistic-Late Roman image of the
ruler and rejected any concept of a warrior king, even after Byz-
antine society came under the influence of Western chivalric cul-
ture. Finally, in the course of a careful study of two tenth-century
ivory triptychs, Nicholas Oikonomides proves that Byzantium
never accepted the idea of a holy war, neither while it was engaged
in repelling the Arab *jihad* nor while it was dealing with the West-
ern crusaders.

The second section will treat the manner in which the Byzan-
tines waged war and how their soldiers actually lived. John Wortley
has assembled some fascinating details on the lives of soldiers, nug-
gets he has found among the *Apophthegmata patron*, collections
of the wise sayings attributed to leading monks among the desert
fathers; these collections date to the early Byzantine centuries
(fourth through early seventh century). Leslie MacCoull offers a
short study on the position of soldiers in sixth-century Egypt, a
society dominated by Monophysite Christians who were in a spir-
itual battle with the Chalcedonian imperial government. Emily
Albu Hanawalt studies the position of the Varangian Guard within
Byzantine society, a group of Nordic barbarians hired to fight for
the imperial government, and Eric McGeer examines the role of
Armenian soldiers in the Byzantine military. Walter Hanak de-
scribes the confrontation between the Byzantine emperor John
Tzimiskes and Svjatoslav the Rus' during the years 970–71. Sta-
matina McGrath discusses the same campaign against Svjatoslav,
but this time from the standpoint of the two Byzantine historians,
Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes, who described this war in de-
tail. Finally, John Barker examines the hostilities among the Or-
thodox Balkan states in the fourteenth century, hostilities which
blocked any united action against the Turks.

The last section of this study contains those articles that address
problems regarding specific sources for Byzantine military history.
These are articles primarily for specialists, but even here one finds
information of general interest. First, David Johnson analyzes the
sixth-century Monophysite tradition behind the much later Ethi-
opian stories about the Arab Christian king Caleb's victory over

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the Himyarites in Arabia. Second, Marios Philippides demonstrates how modern historians have considered a sixteenth-century secondary account of the Turks' conquest of Constantinople to be an eye-witness description. Third, John Fine emphasizes how Christian embarrassment over the Turks' rapid conquest of Serbia and Bosnia produced some distortions in the extant sources, i.e., a tendency to find scapegoats for the military failures. Finally, Alexander Kazhdan presents a detailed study of the vocabulary used by the twelfth-century Byzantine historian, Niketas Choniates, to describe offensive and defensive modes of warfare. Kazhdan also urges scholars of Byzantine Greek to undertake similar lexical studies of the many other East Roman narrative historians so that Byzantinists can interpret more accurately the battle descriptions that have survived. At present, researchers do not have available a comprehensive lexicon of Byzantine Greek military terms. An adequate dictionary would indicate subtle shifts in the meaning of classical Greek words over the centuries and would include new expressions of foreign origin. That such a basic research tool is lacking indicates how much scholarly work remains to be done before one can complete a comprehensive study of peace and war from the Byzantine perspective.

In order to assist other researchers interested in studying Byzantine attitudes toward war and peace, John Nesbitt has prepared an extensive bibliography. Scholars will find this list a convenient starting point for exploring more deeply the issues raised in this *Festschrift*.

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# [2]

## On Just War in Byzantium

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The Byzantine Empire was, for long periods of its history, a state in war, or at least a state in which war played an important role, sometimes even a fundamental one. Scholars have given considerable attention to various aspects of the impact of military needs and activities on the state and society, from the point of view of both political history and administrative and social history. The composition of the army, the recruitment of soldiers, and the all-important fiscal questions regarding the mode of payment of soldiers and army officials have all been the object of detailed and profound study. The ideology of war in Byzantium has received less attention. The inquiry into this topic has tended to focus on the question of the existence or nonexistence of the concept of "holy war" in Byzantium. While this interest is understandable, given the fact that two other medieval societies, close neighbors of Byzantium, had rather clear concepts of holy war, whether *jihad* or crusade, it is also somewhat unfortunate, on at least two counts. First, the terms of the discussion have not always been clear, nor have scholars always respected the peculiarities of holy war, for example, that, among other things, it must be promulgated by a religious authority, which is also the sole authority capable of granting remission of sins or declaring the warriors martyrs; as a result, sober assessments of the question have alternated with extravagant claims for a Byzantine "crusade."[1] Second, this discussion is limited in time, centering on the tenth century with occasional forays into the past, as far back as Herakleios; but if the undoubted religious coloring of tenth-century warfare has

given scholars visions of holy war, surely no such contention can be made for subsequent periods.[2] And yet the Byzantines continued to wage war; did they have an ideology to justify it?

Most societies need to find justification for warfare, as an ancient author recognized in a somewhat cynical passage.[3] The quest for arguments that would distinguish just from unjust wars has engaged scholars and politicians of the Western tradition from the time of classical Greece to our own day.[4] A summary of the Greek and Roman argumentation may be found in Frederick H. Russell's *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1975). For the medieval period, Russell stresses the difference between holy war and just war, the latter being a secular affair whose characteristics are that the authority competent to declare it is a public authority, that it is waged for motives such as defense of territory, or persons or rights, and that, unlike holy war, it limits "violence by codes of right conduct."[5] The Western Middle Ages saw the elaboration of theories of just war, of holy war, and of the crusade, which is a form of just war of the church. These form the basis of the modern Catholic theory of just war, which incorporates formal, elaborate, and complex criteria.[6]

The Byzantines did not produce formal, detailed statements regarding just war. Thus the principles and indeed the existence of such a concept must be sought in and distilled from a number of sources. In this paper, I have a modest aim, which is to address the question primarily on the basis of one text, the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Since the reason for this choice is not self-evident, a few words of justification are necessary. Princess Anna Komnene has a biography which, *prima facie*, would suggest that one might profitably search her work for ideas of just war. She came from a martial family: her father, Alexios I, and his brother, the sebastocrator Isaac, had been famous soldiers before Alexios ascended the throne as the representative of a strong military aristocracy. Her brother, Emperor John II, was a man who spent a great deal of his time on campaign. On his deathbed, he boasted: "The East and the West have seen me in battle; I have fought the foreign peoples on both continents; only for a short while have I remained in the palace; almost my entire life has been spent in a tent."[7] Her nephew, Manuel I, was an equally

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renowned soldier, who combined military and knightly valor. Yet she disliked both her brother and her nephew, while her historical work, which she began writing in 1138, is an unabashed panegyric of her father. One could suppose that she might be moved to justify Alexios' many wars, and perhaps differentiate them from those of his successors. Second, Anna Komnene was an uncommonly well-educated woman and a patron of letters. She was, even more uncommonly, interested in philosophy, very much including Aristotle.[8] Did any of Aristotle's thoughts on government, war, and peace filter through to her own work? Furthermore, her father's reign had witnessed dramatic events, some of which she had seen, while others she knew from the accounts of eyewitnesses and from official documents. Among these events, the First Crusade is particularly pertinent for our topic. Her father had been drawn into hostilities with Christians and, what is more, Christians who said they were engaged in holy war for the liberation of the Holy Land. The crusade was a new phenomenon in Western Europe as well; one would expect that the presence of these warriors for the faith, and their clash with the Byzantines, might raise questions about what constitutes a just and meritorious war.[9]

Anna Komnene, in her Preface to the *Alexiad*, shows the reader that she knows how history should be written, and that she values objectivity which, she promises, will guide her narrative. What she wrote, however, is in some ways an epic. It looks like an epic partly because most of her history, as indeed much of her father's reign, is concerned with wars. The opponents are clearly drawn: the Byzantine Empire is pitted against the rest of the world, and her father against a succession of enemies. Her view of international affairs has the simplicity of the worldview of empires. The Byzantine Empire is the center, figuratively and geographically; the rest of the world is measured against it and is judged according to the dangers or opportunities it presents to the Empire. In her most expansive moments, she produces the most traditional possible theory of what the limits of the Byzantine Empire were or should be: "There was a time when the frontiers of Roman power were the two pillars at the limits of east and west—the so-called pillars of Hercules in the west,

and those of Dionysos, not far from the Indian border, in the east.
As far as its extent was concerned, it is impossible to say how great
was the power of the Roman Empire: it included Egypt, Meroë, all
the land of the Troglodytes, the countries near the Torrid Zone; on
the other side, the famous Thule, and all the peoples who live in the
region of the North, over whom is the polar star."[10] That is the old
Roman Empire at its most extensive. In more sober moments, she
considered the legitimate boundaries to be those that existed before
the battle of Mantzikert and the Turkish invasions of the late
eleventh century.[11] These were also boundaries of strategy: they were
the frontiers her father wanted to restore.

The state as conceived by our historian was more than notionally
vast; it was also, by unquestioned right in her eyes, the ruler of the
world: "all men look upon [the Empire of the Romans] with envy.
Being *by nature* the master of other nations, it is the object of enmity
on the part of its slaves."[12] Once more, this is a notional mastery;
she does not show the Empire engaged in a struggle to subdue the
rest of the world. On the contrary, it was a state under attack.
Enemies surrounded it on all sides, and they were all attacking it,
simultaneously or in waves, during the reign of her father: the
"Franks" (a generic name) and the Venetians from the West, the
Turks from the East, the barbarian Scythians (Petchenegs and
Cumans) from the North.[13] It was God, she says, who allowed such
tribulations to fall upon His people, or else it was the incompetence
of previous rulers. But it was also God, or fate, that had placed on
the throne a man like her father, almost a martyr, almost equal to
the apostles, a Christlike figure, to defend and enlarge the state by
deeds which not even Demosthenes nor all of the ancient philoso-
phers could adequately describe.[14] She never openly poses the ques-
tion whether his wars were justified; but her entire narrative makes it
clear that she thought they were. On what basis were they justified? I
think we can answer this question by looking at her description of
the circumstances in which Alexios went to war.

(a) *Self-defense.* First of all, Alexios' wars were defensive—always
in Anna's view. When discussing Bohemond's attack on the
Byzantine Empire, in 1105, she says, "as for the barbarians, wherever

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they were, he [Alexios] gave them no pretext for war and did not use compulsion on them; nevertheless, if they did cause trouble, he checked them."[15] This passage is indicative of a more general attitude of hers which suggests that the Byzantines always fought in order to defend themselves, and did not initiate wars. That is very much in evidence in Anna's treatment of Alexios' relations with the leaders of the First Crusade. It is established from the very beginning that the Crusaders had aggressive intentions toward the Byzantine Empire. While Peter the Hermit is acknowledged to have wanted simply to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher, "the other counts (and in particular Bohemond) cherished their old grudge against Alexius and sought a good opportunity to avenge the glorious victory which the Emperor had won at Larissa. They were all of one mind and in order to fulfill their dream of taking Constantinople they adopted a common policy."[16] Once this has been established, all of Alexios' actions toward the Crusaders are seen to have been undertaken in self-defense. Even so, Anna repeats every so often the fact that the Crusaders were the aggressors, as, for example, when Alexios refuses to attack them even after repeated provocations outside the walls of Constantinople. He asks them to desist, both because this was Good Thursday and because he did not want to have bloodshed between Christians. In the end, as the Westerners become more menacing, he is forced to attack them, but even so he gives orders that they are to be frightened rather than killed.[17] Similarly, Bohemond's eventual attack against the Byzantine Empire so clearly put the emperor in a defensive position that Anna does not even have to justify this war at great length. It suffices for her to establish Bohemond's unrelieved hostility and the threat he posed to the state: Bohemond wanted to "throw into tumult the Roman world which you rule," and threatened that "with many a murder I will make your cities and your provinces run with blood, until I set up my spear in Byzantium itself."[18]

(b) *The recovery of territory.* If Alexios' wars were undertaken in defense of the state, that state was, it will be remembered, larger than the actual frontiers of the Empire at any time during his reign. In Asia Minor, the Byzantines claimed by right those lands which

had been conquered by the Turks after 1071. What in the theory of
just war is called the recovery of lost goods (*rebus repetitis*) looms
large in the *Alexiad*.[19] It is the basis for Alexios' insistence that the
Crusaders swear to restore to him all the lands they took from the
Turks that had previously been Byzantine.[20] The oath was greatly
resented by the Crusaders, and of course it was broken in the act.
But for Anna and her contemporaries, it was evident that the Empire
had the right, and the emperor had virtually the obligation, to
recover the lost lands. Thus, when Bohemond did not respond to
Alexios' demand that he hand over Laodicea and Antioch, Alexios
realized that "the frontiers of the Roman Empire must be firmly
held," and sent troops to Cilicia to take it as well as to prepare for
an assault on Antioch, then held by the Crusaders.[21] These frontiers,
of course, were not the actual ones, but rather the frontiers the
Byzantines had had in the past. The point is made with perfect clar-
ity in an encounter of Alexios I with the Turkish sultan Malik Shah.
The sultan is told that unless he yields to Byzantine authority, stops
his attacks against Christians, and withdraws to the lands "where
you used to dwell before Romanos Diogenes became emperor,"
unless he refrains from "crossing the frontiers of the Empire,"
Alexios will "exterminate your race."[22] The message is clear: the lost
territories belong to the Byzantine Empire, and the sultan must
return them or face war—and after fair warning, at that.

   This position was given legal force in the agreement made at
Devol between Alexios I and Bohemond in 1107. An important
term of the agreement was that Bohemond and his men would turn
over to the Byzantine emperor any land which "either now or in the
past was subject to your authority," or "any land once upon a time
paying tribute to this Empire."[23] In the same passage, the past
boundaries of the Byzantine Empire are said to have extended from
the Adriatic to the whole East and along the length of Great Asia.
It must be remembered that at the time of the treaty of Devol the
Byzantines were speaking from a position of strength and could
make large claims. The text of that treaty is the most expansionist
in the *Alexiad*. Nevertheless, even at that moment, the actual, as
opposed to the theoretical, claims of the Byzantines were not

boundless but remained more or less firmly fixed to the eleventh-century frontiers.

Given this position, the wars in Asia Minor are justified. Thus, when Anna mentions that, after the treaty of Devol, Alexios had sent large armies to fight with the Westerners against the Turks, she says that her father did this for two reasons. First, he was concerned for the Westerners, since they were Christians, and he did not want them to be killed at the hands of the Turks. Second, he wanted to ensure that they would return to him the cities of the Turks and thus extend the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

(c) *Breach of agreement.* War is also undertaken if the other side breaks treaties. In such a case, we can consider the war to be defensive, since it follows a hostile act on the part of the opponent. It is also the result of a breach of contract, and a very important contract since in this period, and throughout the twelfth century, treaties or truces or, generally, agreements with other states or peoples were sealed and confirmed by oaths. Bohemond, when he attacked the Empire, is accused by Alexios of having broken his promises and oaths; the failure of his enterprise is the proof of his guilt.[24] When, after Bohemond's death, his nephew Tancred decides to take possession of Antioch in his own right, even though by treaty the ownership of the city belonged to Alexios, Anna produces a wealth of argumentation to justify Alexios' decision to prepare for war against Tancred. The first, and recurring, argument is that the "Franks" had broken the treaties and forsworn their oaths. For that reason, "he could not tolerate the situation, and he had to make strong reprisal (ἀντιδρᾶσαι) and to punish them for such inhumanity." He found the behavior of the Franks heartrending and the insult intolerable. The Greek word for insult is ὕβρις, which is also the term used to render the Latin *injuria*, that is, an injury which may be avenged by war. Tancred was charged with injustice and with breaking his oaths. Nevertheless, Alexios first sent ambassadors to him to persuade him to change his course, and it was only after Tancred's refusal that the emperor contemplated war.[25] It is evident that here we have a conflation of causes which would justify hostile action against Tancred: his breach of the treaties and the oaths, his holding on to lands which

according to Alexios belonged to the Byzantine Empire, his injustice, the injury done to the Byzantine state. All of these are, as we shall see below, causes of just war both in the Roman and in the Western medieval traditions.

The case against Tancred is made so carefully partly, no doubt, because Alexios sought help among the leaders of the other Crusader states, and thus had to prepare a full justification. In other cases, the breach of agreement is presented without much discussion. Thus, at one point during the long-drawn-out Petcheneg wars of the first part of Alexios' reign, the emperor offered them a peace treaty, which they accepted. Then the Cumans sent ambassadors to the emperor, asking his permission to attack the Petchenegs. Alexios refused, "because a treaty had already been concluded." The Petchenegs, however, since they no longer feared the Cumans, broke the treaty, for "all barbarians are usually fickle and characteristically unable to keep their pledges."[26] War, therefore, broke out anew.

(d) *Averting a greater evil.* While Anna Komnene does not explicitly justify any particular war on the grounds that it prevents a greater evil, this idea appears in an action connected with warfare. At the time of his war with Robert Guiscard, Alexios had melted down vessels and objects belonging to the church, thus provoking a major crisis. In justifying his action, Anna has the emperor say that the Empire was in mortal danger from the Turks, the Petchenegs, and the Normans, and there was no money to defend it. He continues: "if the whole country is being taken prisoner, if its cities and Constantinople itself are already in danger of becoming captives, if then we, in such a moment of peril, laid our hands on a few objects . . . and used them to secure our freedom, surely we leave no reasonable excuse to our detractors for charging us."[27] The argument here is that danger from the enemy necessitates war; the needs of war, and the greater evil of the destruction of the state and the captivity of its inhabitants, justify an act which is otherwise prohibited by the canons.

(e) *The pursuit of peace.* Aristotle had said that "no one desires to be at war for the sake of being at war, nor deliberately takes steps to cause a war."[28] He had further said that war may be necessary, but

peace is noble, and preferable.[29] Anna Komnene's description of her
father and his policies seems almost an illustration of these princi-
ples. Alexios is a man of peace: by nature peaceful, he became most
warlike when he was forced into it by the actions of others.[30] She
insists on this, and insists also on his efforts either to preserve the
peace or to restore it as soon as possible after hostilities. He was a
mild and philanthropic man, who knew, as any good general should,
that there were many ways to achieve what he wanted and what was
good for the state. Against internal enemies (the Bogomils), he used
both words to persuade and the sword to coerce.[31] Against external
enemies, he wanted to achieve victory. But, Anna says, a good gen-
eral can use many means to that end: finesse, treaties, trickery.[32] In
her discussion of Alexios' last campaigns against the Turks, she
waxes enthusiastic on this theme. Yes, courage is admirable, but it
must be informed by reasoning. The good general is one who
achieves his objective; and the best objective is victory without dan-
ger. This can be achieved by battle or by stratagems; as long as the
results are the same, the means are equally good.[33] Sometimes,
indeed, peace is sought because the power of the enemy seems too
great.[34] But Anna has a general view about peace that transcends the
expediencies of the moment. It is presented at its lengthiest in a pas-
sage about Bohemond's attack on the Empire, where she laments the
many troubles which befell the emperor from internal and external
enemies. And yet the emperor was gentle and philanthropic, shower-
ing many benefices on his subjects, while to the barbarians he gave
no pretext for war, although of course he fought them when they
attacked. The mark of a good general, she says, is to prefer peace to
war, and this is how Alexios behaved: "he cultivated peace to an
unusual degree; its presence was always and by every means cher-
ished and its absence worried him, so that he often spent sleepless
nights wondering how it might return." Special pleading all of this
may be, but there is one phrase which is interesting: "peace is the
purpose of all wars (εἰρήνη μὲν γὰρ τέλος ἐστὶ πολέμου παντός)."[35] This
is a quotation from Aristotle, and whereas the particular passage
which Anna is quoting is not connected with just war, the connec-
tion is made in another passage where the same principle is enunci-

ated: "war must be for the sake of peace."[36] St. Augustine also saw war as an instrument of peace: "Peace is the desired end of war. For every man, even in the act of waging war, is in quest of peace, but no one is in quest of war when he makes peace."[37] By insisting, and at some length, on her father's love of peace, and by showing quite frequently that he resorted to war because peace was not possible, therefore as a last resort, Anna gives a blanket justification of all of Alexios' wars.

This resolves a certain contradiction which is evident in her account. Her father is presented as a man of peace, but he is also pictured as a man of great courage, whose first instinct was for war, but whose reason dictated peace.[38] Anna was a great admirer of courage, valor, martial virtues, and a good seat on a horse. She admired great warriors, whether they were Byzantines or her father's most dangerous enemies, such as Bohemond and Robert Guiscard.[39] Alexios himself is presented as a great soldier, learned in the arts of war.[40] In a particularly striking passage, we find him leading the army against the Turks, "riding on like a great tower or a pillar of fire, or like a divine and celestial apparition."[41] Valor was, we know, an important imperial virtue in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[42] In Anna Komnene, admiration for it is qualified by the insistence that Alexios, the great soldier, was a man of peace. Undoubtedly this is to some extent a concealed criticism of his successors, particularly of his even more martial son, John II Komnenos. The criticism is occasionally made overtly: in discussing a peace treaty which Alexios had negotiated with the Turks, Anna says that the Emperor's purpose was that the treaty should last for a long time, and indeed there was peace and prosperity for the rest of his reign, "but with him all the benefits disappeared and his efforts came to nothing through the stupidity of those who inherited his throne."[43] Her insistence on Alexios as a man of peace who nevertheless is forced to make war may also be something of a literary ploy, pointing up the tragic element in her father's reign. Finally, however, there is no contradiction; and her description of her father conforms with a good Aristotelian concept that peace is more desirable than war, but war may be necessary and courage is a great virtue in its pursuit.[44]

Does all of the above suggest that we have here a coherent idea of just war? I think that it does, although it must be stressed that nowhere in the *Alexiad* is there a systematic statement about just war. Anna was, after all, neither a lawyer, nor a canonist, nor a philosopher, but a historian, concerned less with establishing criteria for the just war than with showing her father in a good light. Ideas which conform to ancient and medieval theories of just war are subsumed in her description of the reasons for Alexios' wars. Let us return to her various justifications of her father's wars, and examine them from this viewpoint.

(a) *Self-defense.* This is an age-old idea, basic to most Western theories of just war. In an ancient Greek list of arguments for making war, it appears as the need to punish the wrongdoers if there has been injustice in the past and to fight in defense of oneself or one's kinsmen and allies.[45] Self-defense is also a Roman concept, incorporated in the Justinianic Code and eventually in the *Basilics*. There is a legal right to repel force with force, and that certainly applies to war.[46] There is also a strong idea that force and injury or insult (*injuria*) are both to be repelled, and there is an interesting convergence of vocabulary in the *Basilics* and in the *Alexiad*. In *Basilics* 2.1.3, it is stated that τὸ ἀπωθεῖσθαι τὴν ἐπιφερομένην βίαν καὶ ὕβριν is a right governed by the *jus gentium*.[47] In the *Alexiad*, the emperor opposes the ὕβρις committed by Tancred.[48] The subtleties embodied in the concept of self-defense are not elaborated upon in the *Alexiad*; but then it seems that they were not elaborated by the Western medieval civil lawyers either.[49] Self-defense is an important element in the just war theory of Western canonists.

(b) *The recovery of things lost.* This is a basic Roman tenet justifying war. The things lost can be either territory or less tangible possessions. The concept was further elaborated in medieval canon law by Gratian and his successors.[50] In Byzantium, the recovery of things lost appears with some force in the *Epanagoge* (or *Eisagoge*), the law code promulgated by Basil I, Leo VI, and Alexander: "the purpose of the emperor is to safeguard and maintain through his virtue the things which exist; to acquire through vigilance the things lost; and to recover, through his wisdom and through just victories, the things

absent."[51] Hélène Ahrweiler has pointed out that we are here in the presence of a concept of the just war which justifies the policies of recovery of territories and even of the expansionism of the late ninth and tenth centuries.[52] She also points out, however, that in the Komnenian period imperial ideology was more defensive, consisting of the recovery of territories and prestige.[53] It is certainly the defensive recovery of things lost that we find in the pages of the *Alexiad*.[54]

(c) *Breach of agreement.* This seems to be an element in the Roman concept of just war.[55] I have the impression that the most important contribution of the Byzantines to the question regarding the grounds for a just war is connected with the breach of contract, that is, of a treaty. The pages of the historians Kinnamos and Choniates are replete with references to breach of treaty by others as a just cause of war. The development of this idea is an interesting one, and I plan to discuss it in another study. For the moment, it is sufficient to mention one particularly striking example. Manuel I Komnenos harangues the Czech king, trying to keep him from allying himself with the Hungarians. In the speech, reported by Kinnamos, he explicitly compares the breach of a treaty (by the Hungarians) to the breach of contract in civil law, and presents it as a cause of just war for the Byzantines: "One who deals with a private individual and, should it happen thus, scorns his agreement does not go unpunished by the law; shall the Hungarians, who have acted against their treaties with such an emperor, remain inviolable? Far from it. Then does the emperor wage war justly?"[56]

(d) *Averting a greater evil.* This idea appears as a part of Aristotle's discussion of the proper use of power and the proper aim of the state. He says that the object of preparing for war is not "in order that men may enslave those who do not deserve slavery, but in order that first they may themselves avoid being enslaved to others." He then lists two other reasons, namely, so that men may seek suzerainty for the sake of the subject peoples but not for world domination, and so that men may hold despotic power over those who deserve to be slaves. The last two points are not relevant to our discussion, since they do not arise for twelfth-century Byzantium.[57] The first, however, is relevant.

(e) *The pursuit of peace.* As we have already noted, the idea that a just war must be waged so that peace may be achieved is an Aristotelian idea, adopted by St. Augustine. The medieval canonists set great store by the proposition that peace is the desirable condition, and that a just war is an instrumentality of peace.[58]

We may thus conclude that Anna's descriptions of the causes of her father's wars incorporate the most important just war criteria of ancient and medieval societies. The objection might be raised that the concordance is forced, because I began by grouping Anna's descriptions in categories which are known categories of just war. It is true that the categorization is my own; but it is equally true that the argumentation and the descriptions are Anna's. If any doubts remain on that score, one should perhaps look again at her discussion of the justification of hostilities against Tancred: he was, by her account, guilty of breach of contract, insult, ingratitude toward those who helped him in war, injustice, and holding on to the lawful possessions of the Byzantine Empire.[59] The ultimate sources of her ideas of just war can be traced to Aristotle and to the Roman concepts which infused the Byzantine legal system. It seems to me, in fact, that her debt to Aristotle is quite considerable, not only with regard to just war, but more generally in her concept of good government. Thus, for example, her statement that "the art of ruling [is] a science, a kind of supreme philosophy," and her description of Alexios as "the master of the science of government" owe a good deal to Aristotle.[60] This should not be surprising, for we do know that Anna was an avid student of Aristotle. Not only had she studied his works, but she organized a project for the production of commentaries on Aristotle, the first for a long time. Among the scholars she supported was Michael of Ephesos, whose commentaries on the *Politics* and the *Rhetoric* were written before 1138, that is, before the composition of the *Alexiad*. There had also been a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics,* written during her lifetime. In fact, so driven was she in her demand for work on Aristotle that we find in her funeral oration the interesting statement that Michael of Ephesos attributed his blindness to it, because "he spent sleepless nights over commentaries on Aristotle at her command, whence

came the damage done to his eyes by candles through desiccation."[61]

Aristotle and Roman law are, of course, secular influences. What role did Christianity play in Anna's concept of justified warfare? Certainly, statements to the effect that Alexios did not want to fight against Christians and that he was concerned that Christians not be killed by the Turks are the statements of a Christian; but they play no role in the justification of war. Neither does the pious statement that her father was a most saintly man, equal to the apostles, whose fondest hope was to convert all the Muslims and the Petchenegs to Christianity, since that comes at the end of a passage discussing Alexios' good treatment of Turkish deserters, and is not connected with his waging war.[62] Christianity did have an influence, however. I see it in Anna's insistence on Alexios' desire for peace. True, that has impeccable ancient antecedents, as we have seen. Nevertheless, medieval Christian societies faced the problem of reconciling Christian ideas of peace and meekness with the Greek and Roman ideas of war, as well as with political realities. If in Western Europe the reconciliation took place through the development of the concepts of holy war and the just war of the church, in Byzantium there was no such development; the reconciliation in Byzantine society seems to have been at least partly based on the elaboration of the idea that the Empire and the emperor sought peace but were forced into war.

This idea did not, of course, begin with Anna, nor did it develop in the twelfth century. It is much older, and it is present in important texts. A sixth-century text is pertinent, presenting as it does views with only a superficial similarity to those of Anna Komnene. Corippus, in his panegyric of Justin II, speaks specifically of the desire for peace, which, however, does not mean fear of war. On the contrary, says the poet, those who subject themselves to the Empire will live in peace; those who are proud "will perish by war." One must note here the somewhat offhand reference to peace as the desired condition and the aggressive superiority which considers justifiable a war undertaken against those who will not subject themselves to the Empire.[63] Quite different is the attitude of Emperor Leo VI, in the opening statement of the Prooimion to his *Taktika*. This text, which had wide circulation in Byzantium, has a direct relevance

to the inquiry about just war in Byzantium, and I would, therefore, like to summarize some of its points.[64] The emperor begins by stating that what makes him rejoice is not power and authority, but rather the peace and prosperity of his subjects and the correction or redressal (ἐπανόρθωσις) of their affairs. This is a good, old, traditional statement, and one made also by Anna Komnene about her father: the emperor looks not after his own well-being but after the common good.[65] The most important factor affecting the well-being of his subjects, continues Leo VI, is the science of strategy. Then there is a long passage, whose vocabulary is heavily indebted to Christian teaching, and which states that all men should have embraced peace and love for one another, since they are created in the image of God and are endowed with reason. However, the Devil has caused men to wage war, contrary to their nature. And, in a telling passage, he continues that it is therefore essential to defend oneself against the enemy, and eradicate the evil, so that peace will be observed by all.[66] The vocabulary is Christian; the idea that man is by nature peace-loving is perhaps also Christian; the idea that one wages a defensive war, and that the purpose of all war is peace is an older, secular idea, here presented in its medieval form. The new, medieval aspect is significant, for it stresses the importance of peace. It is, undoubtedly, the difficulty in reconciling Christian teaching with endemic warfare that led both the Byzantines and the Western Europeans to definitions or descriptions of just war, even though Western thought on the subject was much more systematic than that of the Byzantines, and quite different in content.

Thus, in his *Taktika,* Leo VI states that above all it is important that the cause of a war be just.[67] After all that has been said above, we recognize this statement as a traditional one; not only does Aristotle say that when one is exhorting people to go to war one should make sure to bring forth the right arguments, but Onasander, a writer of the first century A.D., uses a phraseology that is very close to Leo's: "It is most important that the cause of a war must be wisely constituted, and that it be evident to all that the war is being waged justly."[68] And what is a just war for Leo VI? It is a defensive war, since one must only fight against those who invaded his lands.

For the emperor stresses that peace must be preserved with regard
both to his own subjects and to the barbarians, and if alien nations
are content to stay within their own boundaries, they are not to be
disturbed. Fighting against peaceful alien nations would be unjust.
A just war is a war fought against those who began the injustice by
initiating hostilities and launching an invasion; then will the
Byzantines have God on their side. Finally, the emperor reiterates,
for the benefit of the general to whom this is addressed, the
paramount desire for peace and the paramount necessity to wage
war only for just cause.[69]

A few comments are in order. Leo VI's text is medieval and
Christian in language and style. It also diverges from ancient Greek
and Roman concepts of war in one very important way: it does not
advocate war against those who, "although designed by nature to be
subjugated, . . . refuse to submit to it"; that is, it does not suggest
either that there are those who are by definition meant to rule over
others, or that war should be employed to impose good government
on those who do not have it.[70] The only just war presented here is a
defensive war. Hence it follows that it is also a limited war, with lim-
ited objectives. Now these are characteristics of a secular theory of
the just war; the main contribution of Christianity, but it is an
important one, is the insistence on peace. The difference from
Western Europe could not be greater. While medieval Western
Europe operated on the basis of Augustine's open-ended idea that a
just war is one that avenges injustices, Leo VI had one and only one
injustice in mind: the invasion of his territory.[71] One must note par-
ticularly Leo's statement that peaceful alien nations are to be left in
peace, as an illustration of the fact that for him war, at least in terms
of ideology, had limited and secular aims.

It is now possible to see Anna Komnene in a better perspective.
Her ideas about what constitutes just causes for war, and therefore a
just war, are not hers alone. Most of them can be found in earlier
Byzantine texts, as well as in other Byzantine writers of the twelfth
century. That is so because the concepts are rooted in Roman ideas
of the state and war, and ultimately in ancient Greek ideas as well.
At the same time, Byzantine concepts of just war differ from ancient

ones, and are far from static. The very preoccupation with justifying warfare is more medieval than ancient, even though the elements of the description or definition of just war go back to Antiquity.[72] The difference is already evident in Leo VI's *Taktika*. Here we see a medieval Christian definition of just war which is not that of Western Europe. His premises are avowedly Christian, but the substance of his statements is secular: he is advocating not a holy war but a just war, even though he imputes an important role to God and the Devil in the conduct of human affairs, and even though the concept of peace is given a special, Christian weight. In the twelfth century, on the other hand, the role of breach of contract as a just cause of war assumes greater significance, at least in my view. As for Anna Komnene, she is more concerned than most Byzantine historians to show that the wars she describes were justified. Historical circumstances forced her to think about such matters. Her particular contribution lies in the fact that, because of her education and her interest in Aristotle, she presents her ideas in a secular vocabulary with a strong Aristotelian flavor, and in a fairly coherent form. The concept of just war, as it emerges from her pages, is a war fought in self-defense, for the recovery of lost territories, occasioned sometimes by a breach of treaty, and undertaken as a last resort, in the pursuit of peace. It is also a limited war, not aiming at the extermination, physical or moral, of the opponent. Therefore, war is only one of the possible means of achieving the objectives of the recovery of lost territory and the establishment of peace. At the same time that she was composing her History, in Western Europe St. Bernard of Clairvaux was advocating unlimited war against the pagan Slavs, in the context of the Second Crusade. He promised Crusader privileges, that is, the remission of sins, to all those who armed themselves "for the total destruction or, at least, the conversion of these peoples," and forbade any treaty with the Slavs "until, with the help of God, either this people or its religion shall be exterminated."[73] Anna Komnene would have been appalled, both by the substance of such a statement and by the fact that it was enunciated by an ecclesiastic.

In Western medieval Europe, one question was of paramount importance for the development of theories of just wars. That is the

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question of competent authority: a just war could only be declared by
a competent authority, but where was the locus of this authority? In
Roman law, the competent authority was the Roman people, and
eventually the emperor. But in Western Europe, when these questions
became a matter of debate, that is, in the twelfth century, the canon-
ists and Romanists were faced with a real situation, in which there
already existed groups which had long waged wars that they consid-
ered just: the feudal aristocracy and the church. The most important
factor, both in terms of the development of ideology and, perhaps, in
historical terms, was the role of the church: was the church an
authority competent to declare and/or wage a just war? The answer
of the canonists, after some equivocation and perhaps with lingering
uneasiness, was nevertheless a firm yes; it could not have been other-
wise after the developments in the church and in the papacy during
the eleventh century.[74] Thus holy war, which can only be proclaimed
by the church, and just war overlapped to some extent.

   In my view, the basic difference between Byzantium and Western
Europe as far as this issue is concerned is that, for historical reasons,
there never was a question in Byzantium as to who was the authority
competent to wage war. That was, it is perfectly clear, the emperor.[75]
While the canonists of Western Europe were debating that burning
issue, the twelfth-century Byzantine canonists wrote only two sen-
tences pertinent to it. Significantly, this statement is inserted in the
commentary on a canon regarding factions and conspiracy, and it
restates the principle of Roman and then Byzantine law, that an indi-
vidual who wages war despite imperial orders is punished, even if he
is victorious.[76] No one dreamed of asking whether the church had
the authority to declare or wage war.

   Similarly, while in Western Europe the theories of the just war of
the church and the theory of the crusade were being elaborated, that
is, in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in Byzantium
the canonists dealt with the problem once, and in a way that was the
exact opposite of the Western concepts. The occasion was given by
canon 3 of St. Basil, which absolves of the charge of murder the sol-
diers who kill in war, fighting for pious ends; nevertheless, the sol-
dier is supposed to abstain from communion for three years. The
canonists expend most of their ingenuity in trying to justify the fact

that the soldier is absolved of the sin of murder, and they do so on the basis that this is averting a greater evil: for if the barbarians were allowed to prevail, there would be neither piety nor temperance. Zonaras and Balsamon go as far as to say that the punishment prescribed by St. Basil was a good idea, but one which cannot be implemented, because if it were, soldiers would never be able to take communion. Both canonists then discuss, more as a curiosity than anything else, a request made by Emperor Nikephoros Phocas to Patriarch Polyeuktos and the synod, that soldiers who fell in war should be counted among the martyrs. The patriarch had refused the request, on the basis of this canon, and both our canonists agree with the decision.[77] Is it any wonder that Anna Komnene was profoundly shocked at the idea (and the reality) of Western priests bearing arms and engaging in battle, or that she should describe the Westerners, not at all in a complimentary fashion, as no less enamored of war than of religion?[78]

The question of who has the right to declare a just war is a question of political authority. The Byzantines took their state seriously, and for good reason. The church never sought and never received the competence to wage war. Hence the secular aspect of the Byzantines' thoughts regarding just war, including the thoughts of Anna Komnene. Certainly she presented her father as a pious man, both in war and in peace. Certainly she has him and the entire Byzantine army praying all night and receiving communion before engaging in battle against Robert Guiscard.[79] She, and her father, were certain he was a Christian ruler waging a just war; they would both have been stunned if anyone had suggested that he ever waged a holy war, such as the one that sent the Crusaders east.

## NOTES

1. For sober assessments see, for example, V. Laurent, "L'idée de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine," *Revue historique du sud-est Européen* 23 (1946): 71–98; the commentary of G. Dagron in G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986); for the eleventh and twelfth centuries, P. Lemerle, "Byzance et la croisade," *X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze*

*Storiche, Relazioni,* vol. 3 (Florence, 1955) (= idem, *Le monde de Byzance: Histoire et institutions* [London, 1978], no. VIII), 595–620, esp. 617–20. French historians of an earlier generation saw in the tenth-century wars between the Byzantines and the Muslims a crusade *avant le mot*. See, for example, G. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle, Jean Tzimiscès* (Paris, 1896), 238. A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, " ʽΗ ἰδέα τοῦ « ʽΙεροῦ Πολέμου» στὸ Βυζάντιο κατά τόν 10° αἰώνα: ʽΗ μαρτυρία τῶν Τακτικῶν καὶ τῶν δημηγοριῶν," *Κωνσταντίνος Ζ´ ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος καί ἡ ἐποχή του* (Athens, 1989), 39–55, is an enthusiastic proponent of the idea that the Byzantines had a full-blown concept of holy war, and even of crusade.

2. There is, however, an exception, namely, a thirteenth-century text of Patriarch Michael Autoreianos, granting remission of sins to those who died in war. The editor of the act notes that this was due to Western influence: N. Oikonomidès, "Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autoreianos," in Oikonomidès, *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VIIe–XVe s.)* (London, 1976), no. XV, 115–21, 131–35.

3. [Aristotle], *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum,* Loeb edition (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), 298 ff.

4. See, for example, Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations,* 2d ed. (New York, 1992). To the many contemporary justifications which he adduces, one may add the quite extraordinary effort undertaken shortly before and during the Persian Gulf war to show that even the formal criteria for just war had been met.

5. Russell, *Just War,* 2.

6. See *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response,* a *Pastoral Letter on War and Peace by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops,* May 3, 1983, 36–48.

7. Niketas Choniates, *Historia,* ed. Van Dieten (Berlin, 1975),42–43.

8. Robert Browning, "An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Comnena," in R. Sorabji, ed., *Aristotle Transformed* (London, 1990), 393–406. Cf. Georgina Buckler, *Anna Comnena* (Oxford, 1928), 203–4 and passim. See also above, pp. 133–34.

9. On the *Alexiad* as a source for the Crusade, see Lemerle, "Byzance et la croisade," 596 ff.

10. *Annae Comnenae Porphyrogenitae Alexias,* ed. A. Reifferscheid, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1984), 214. The translation is that of E. R. A. Sewter, slightly emended: *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena,* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 205–6.

11. *Alexias* II, 285.

12. *Alexias* II, 251. The translation is my own. On the idea of a natural division of peoples into those who are masters and slaves by nature, see Aristotle, *Politics* I, ii.18, and I, i.2–3; cf. above, p. 134.

13. *Alexias* II, 250ff.

14. *Alexias* II, 18, 251–52.

15. *Alexias* II, 156; Sewter, 381.

16. *Alexias* II, 86; the translation is Sewter's, p. 319, with slight changes.

17. *Alexias* II, 87–89.

18. *Alexias* II, 142; Sewter, 368.

19. Russell, *Just War*, 5.

20. *Alexias* II, 91; cf. Sewter, 323: "(Godfrey of Bouillon) swore an oath as he was directed that whatever cities, countries or forts he might in future subdue, which had in the first place belonged to the Roman Empire, he would hand over to the officer appointed by the emperor for this very purpose."

21. *Alexias* II, 130 ff; Sewter, 358–59.

22. *Alexias* II, 285; Sewter, 488.

23. *Alexias* II, 211–13; Sewter, 426.

24. *Alexias* II, 201–2.

25. *Alexias* II, 228–29; Sewter, 438–39.

26. *Alexias* I, 244; Sewter, 230. In another instance, Anna Komnene says that Robert Guiscard and Pope Gregory VII had sworn to support each other, but their oaths were empty words; "and having hastily sworn oaths to one another, they were as quick to break them, the barbarians": *Alexias* I, 47. It is a commonplace in twelfth-century historiography, particularly in John Kinnamos, that barbarians do not keep their oaths or their treaties, while the Byzantines do. The fickleness of barbarians is also an ancient stereotype. Professor Benjamin Isaac has brought to my attention a number of pertinent passages, among which see Livy XXI.4.9, Herodian II.7.8–9, Aurelian 31 in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.

27. *Alexias* I, 191; Sewter, 186.

28. *Nicomachean Ethics,* Loeb edition (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1939), X.vii.6.

29. *Politics*, Loeb edition (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1977), VII.xiii.8–9.

30. *Alexias* II, 157: καὶ ἦν ὁ αὐτὸς κατὰ φύσιν μὲν εἰρηνικός, ἀναγκα-ζόντων δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων πολεμικώτατος.

31. *Alexias* II, 255, 259–60. Cf. II, 186, with a reference to Aristotle.

32. *Alexias* II, 186.

33. *Alexias* II, 271–72. Cf., in the same vein, Kinnamos (Bonn ed.), 168–69.

34. As in the case of a temporary truce with the Petchenegs: *Alexias* I, 245.

35. *Alexias* II, 156–57; Sewter, 380–81.

36. Anna's quotation (II, 156) is from *Politics* VII.xiii.17. It is not listed among the nine allusions from Aristotle mentioned by Buckler, *Anna Comnena,* 203. The second quotation is from *Politics* VII.xiii.8.

37. *The City of God against the Pagans*, Loeb edition, vol. 6 (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1959), 165 (XIX.12).

38. *Alexias* II, 186.

39. On Robert Guiscard, see *Alexias* I, 36, 155, 201–2; on Bohemond, 206–8; cf. I, 32, on an unnamed Westerner in Alexios' guard: "he was a brave soldier and full of martial valor"; and I, 67 on Gregory Pakourianos: "he was short in stature, but a good soldier."

40. *Alexias* I, 58–59, 155, 160–62, II, 273–75.

41. *Alexias* II, 281; Sewter, 484.

42. Alexander Kazhdan, "The Aristocracy and the Imperial Ideal," in M. Angold, ed., *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford, 1984), 45–52.

43. *Alexias* II, 238; Sewter, 448.

44. To the references in note 36 above, add *Rhetoric* I, ix.3–8.

45. [Aristotle], *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* II (Loeb edition), p. 300. Punishing those who have been wrongdoers: ἀμύνασθαι τοὺς ἀδικήσαντας. Anna Komnene lists among the reasons for her father's wish to start hostilities against Tancred his desire τῆς τοιαύτης ἀπανθρωπίας αὐτοὺς ἀμύνασθαι: is this an allusion to or a memory of the passage quoted here? For the ancient and Western medieval definitions of the just war I am heavily indebted to Russell's *Just War*.

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46. *Digest* 9.2.45.4: "vim vi defendere omnes leges omniaque iura permittunt" = *Basilics* 60.3.45: βίᾳ γὰρ τὴν βίαν ἐκδικεῖν ὁ νόμος ἐπιτρέπει, and cf. *Bas.* 50.3.7: ἔξεστι βίᾳ τὴν βίαν ἐξωθεῖν καὶ ὅπλα ὅπλοις (= *Digest* 9.2.7). Cf. Russell, *Just War*, 41.

47. Cf. *Digest* 1.1.3: "ut vim atque injuriam propulsemus."

48. *Alexias* II, 228, and cf. above, p.133.

49. Russell, *Just War*, 44. On the defense of the *patria* as the primary just cause of war among medieval theologians, see ibid., 299–300. For the canonists, see ibid., 61ff.

50. Ibid., 5, 60ff.

51. *Jus Graeco-Romanum*, ed. I. and P. Zepos, vol. 2, *Epanagoge* II.1.2.

52. H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975), 42–43. She translates ἀνάληψις (here translated as "to acquire") as "to recover," and ἀνάκτησις (here: "to recover") as "to acquire." A variant reading of the Greek text gives ἐπίκτησις instead of ἀνάκτησις. That would, indeed, mean "to acquire," and would make better sense.

53. Ibid., 67–74.

54. The argument is also made with clarity by Kinnamos (Bonn ed.), 30.

55. Russell, *Just War*, 4–5.

56. Kinnamos, 222–23: ἆρα δίκαια βασιλεὺς πολεμεῖ; The translation is taken from Charles M. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus by John Cinnamus* (New York, 1976), 168. Cf. Kinnamos, 224–25, 235, 30; Brand, 170, 177, 34.

57. *Politics* VII, xiii.13–15. See, however, the striking passage quoted above, p. 130 (*Alexias* II, 251); my point is that Anna Komnene, while she does speak of the Byzantines as "being by nature the masters of other nations," does not hold this as a cardinal idea in her discussion of war.

58. See, for example, Russell, *Just War*, 60ff.

59. See above, pp. 133–34, and *Alexias* II, 227–29.

60. *Alexias* I, 103–4; Sewter, 112; cf. Aristotle, *Politics* I.1.1–3; IV.1.

61. Browning's article, "An Unpublished Funeral Oration," is a seminal contribution to the study of Anna Komnene and twelfth-century Aristotelianism. The quotation is from p. 406; the "unpublished" oration has been published (after the article had first appeared) in J. Darrouzès, *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès, lettres et discours* (Paris, 1970).

62. *Alexias* I, 222.

63. Averil Cameron, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris Libri* V (London, 1976), III.329–31: "nos more parentum / pacem diligimus, numquam fera bella timemus. / pax est subiectis, pereunt per bella superbi." Cf. III.334–40: "bellum non ingerit ultro, / suscipit inlatum. vel si servire negabunt / ingratae gentes, primum tamen admonet hostes/ more gubernandi. . . . quisquis amat pacem, tutus sub pace manebit. / at qui bella volunt, bellorum clade peribunt." I owe this reference to Professor Isaac.

64. I am grateful to Fr. George Dennis, who directed me to the text, and who also made available to me his translation of various passages.

65. *Alexias* II, 238.

66. R. Vári, *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica* (Budapest, 1917), 3–5.

67. Ibid., *Constitutio* II.44: Πρὸ πάντων δὲ ἐπὶ πολέμους ὁπλιζόμενος, ἀποσκόπει δικαίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ τοιούτου πολέμου.

68. E. Korzenszky and R. Vári, *Onasandri Strategicus* (Budapest, 1935), 10: Τὰς δὲ ἀρχὰς τοῦ πολέμου μάλιστά φημι χρῆναι φρονίμως συνίστασθαι καὶ μετὰ τοῦ δικαίου πᾶσι φανερὸν γίγνεσθαι πολεμοῦντα.

69. Vári, II.45–46. Onasander, too, advises a defensive war, undertaken after peace overtures have failed.

70. The quotation is from *Politics* I.iii.8; cf. Russell, *Just War*, 3–4.

71. On St. Augustine, see Russell, *Just War*, 16ff.

72. Professor Isaac has pointed out to me that neither the Greeks nor the Romans of the period of the Republic felt deeply that war needed a moral justification or even the justification of self-defense, and that the same was true for the period of the Roman Empire and for Byzantium through the sixth century. Cf. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford, 1990), 20 ff., 372 ff., and the nuanced treatment by William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327–70 B.C.* (Oxford, 1979), chap. 5, esp. pp. 163–75. I might, perhaps, add that, as we have seen, normative statements do indeed present ideas of just war; practice, of course, was quite another matter. I am grateful to Professor Isaac for reading this paper, and making thoughtful criticisms and comments. Some of his comments I have been able to incorporate here. The more general question he raised, namely, when the change occurred between the late Antique concepts of war and the concepts which existed in the twelfth century, needs a systematic study of the idea of just war in Byzantium from the sixth century onward. Such a study would be most desirable.

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73. "Ad delendas penitus, aut certe convertendas nationes illas" and "donec, auxiliante Deo, aut ritus ipse, aut natio deleatur." *S. Bernardi opera,* vol. 7, *Epistolae,* ed. J. Leclercq and H. Rochais (Rome, 1977), no. 457, p. 433.

74. For the question of the locus of authority, and the answers of the canonists, see Russell, *Just War,* 38, 46 ff., 68 ff., 72 ff., 122–23, and passim. On the eleventh-century developments, see the important work of C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton, 1977).

75. The statement may be capable of modification. In the late Byzantine period, especially after the middle of the fourteenth century, at a time of decentralization, people other than the emperor did wage war. Whether it was thought that they had the authority to do so is a question that must be investigated.

76. Balsamon's commentary to canon 34 of the Council in Trullo: G. Rhalles and M. Potles, Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων, vol. II (Athens, 1852), 382. The reference is to *Basilics* 60.36.3 (= *Digest* 48.4.3).

77. Rhalles and Potles, *Syntagma* 4:131–34. On this, cf. *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum,* ed. Ioannes Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), 274–75. Skylitzes, writing in the late eleventh century, also approves of the action of the patriarch and the synod. On all this, see H.-G. Beck, *Nomos, Kanon und Staatsraison in Byzanz,* Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 384 (Vienna, 1981), 20 ff.

78. *Alexias* II, 84: οὕτως ἐστὶ τὸ βάρβαρον τοῦτο γένος οὐχ ἧττον ἱερατικὸν ἢ φιλοπόλεμον. Cf. Darrouzès, "Les documents byzantins du XIIe siècle sur la primauté romaine," *Revue des études byzantines* 23 (1965): 56–57, on a similar attitude on the part of Theodore Smyrnaios.

79. *Alexias* I, 144.

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## FIGHTING FOR CHRISTIANITY
## HOLY WAR IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Tia M. Kolbaba

This article began as an attempt to explain features of the Byzantine reaction to crusade, especially to the crusading indulgence, which are important and seldom noted. In discussions of Byzantium and the crusades, certain generalizations are ubiquitous, especially the claim that Byzantines could not comprehend the crusades because they themselves had no notion of holy war. Yet most Byzantine authors do not seem to me to manifest total incomprehension of holy war. They criticize specific features of crusade, but not its central premise : that God may want his people to attack the infidel with armed might. To explain the apparent conflict between my reading of the primary sources and the consensus of the secondary sources, it was necessary to describe Byzantine ideas about holy war explicitly and precisely. It was also necessary to review what other historians had said on the topic. So the project grew to what it now is : an introduction to the historiography of holy war in Byzantium ; an analysis of the explicit and implicit definitions of holy war which historians have proposed as they argued about whether Byzantium had a holy war ; and, finally, a discussion of what Byzantines saw when they looked at those holy warriors from the West, the crusaders. Only in this last section do I return to my initial topic : the crusading indulgence.

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PART I. — *BYZANTINE HOLY WAR :*
*HISTORIOGRAPHY AND DEFINITION*

— *"The Greeks do not have, to any degree, a notion of holy war"* (¹).
— *"The crusade, invented anew by westerners, had already been for*
*some centuries, albeit without the word, one of the permanent features*
*of Byzantine life..."* (²).

The disagreement represented by these two quotations characterizes
the historiography of Byzantine attitudes toward war in general and
toward crusade in particular. To paraphrase and cite every author from
the eighteenth century to the present who has analyzed this topic would
be a lengthy process with little enlightenment for author or reader.
Instead, what follows is a brief review of the central conflict.

In the nineteenth century, Gustave Schlumberger wrote two important
histories of tenth-century Byzantine emperors : *Un empereur byzantin*
*au xᵉ siècle : Nicéphore Phocas* (³) and *L'épopée byzantine à la fin*
*du dixième siècle. Guerre contre les Russes, les Arabes, les Allemands,*
*les Bulgares, luttes civiles contre les deux Bardas* (⁴). In these two works,
he presented Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969) and Ioannes I Tzimiskes
(969-976) as proto-crusaders. Both fought wars which they believed
to be commanded and sanctioned by God (⁵). Both fought against
enemies defined in religious terms : namely, the Arab Muslims who
had invaded Palestine, Syria, and eastern Asia Minor. Both were, to
some degree, successful. Tzimiskes may have made the Christian
recovery of Jerusalem his aim ; some evidence, which Schlumberger
accepted, indicates that he succeeded (⁶). Schlumberger also saw

(1) P. LEMERLE, *Byzance et la croisade*, in *Relazioni del X Congresso Internazionale*
*di Scienze Storiche*, vol. III : *Storia del medioevo*, Florence 1955, p. 617 (reprinted
in IDEM, *Le monde de Byzance : Histoire et Institutions*, London 1978, art. VIII).

(2) R. GROUSSET, *Histoire des Croisades* I, Paris 1934, p. 15.

(3) Paris, 1890 (repr. Paris, 1923).

(4) Paris, 1896.

(5) See, for example, SCHLUMBERGER's account of the processions and prayers
before Tzimiskes leaves on campaign in 972 : *L'épopée byzantine*, pp. 82-87

(6) Thanks to greater knowledge of Arabic histories of the tenth century, this
evidence has now been entirely discredited. It is highly doubtful that Tzimiskes even
considered Jerusalem a goal ; it is certain that he never captured that city. See P. E.
WALKER, *The 'Crusade' of John Tzimisces in the Light of New Arabic Evidence*,
in *Byz.* 47 (1977), pp. 301-327.

widespread popular support for these wars. The inhabitants of the
capital resembled crusaders or, perhaps, nationalists ([7]). Schlumberger's
portrait of Byzantine tenth-century campaigns was adopted by various
French historians of crusade, including René Grousset, who provided
one of the epigraphs for this essay. George Ostrogorsky, too, repeated
the idea, referring to "the veritable crusading spirit" in Tzimiskes'
campaigns of 974 and 975 ([8]).

On the other side of the debate, historians after Schlumberger
generally denied the existence of a Byzantine idea of holy war. Each
did so for rather different reasons, and therefore each deserves to be
treated separately. In 1946, Vitalien Laurent published an article
entitled, *L'idée de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine* ([9]). He was
explicit in his definition of holy war :

> Holy war is ... a constant, spontaneous armed struggle seeking the
> conversion, or at least the complete submission of the infidel. It assumes
> a revelatory, universalist religion, and that the one who receives this
> religion is obliged to impose it — if necessary, by armed force — to
> the ends of the earth. The command to fight for the propagation of
> the faith falls upon the community which, called from On High to a
> vocation of conquest, must find in itself the strength for this offensive
> policy. There thus results for each member a religious duty to collaborate,
> at least in a general fashion, in this work of spiritual correction
> [*redressement*]. This kind of obligatory service remains even if the
> grandiose objective is never attained ([10]).

For Laurent, then, a holy war occurs when God commands his people
to wage a war to propagate the faith. Their struggle to obey this
command is constant and spontaneous. The latter quality, as becomes
clear later in Laurent's discussion, indicates a level of popular
enthusiasm and support. The corollaries of these assertions are several.
A war which is for some other purpose than to propagate the faith,
a war which is intermittent, or a war which is the result of careful,

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(7) *E.g.*, *L'épopée byzantine*, p. 84 : "C'étaient là des heures de patriotique angoisse
durant lesquelles les cœurs de toute cette immense multitude battaient à l'unisson
de celui de son basileus bien-aimé...".

(8) *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. HUSSEY, New Brunswick - New Jersey
1957, p. 263.

(9) *Revue historique du sud-est européen* 23 (1946), pp. 71-98.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 73.

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long-term planning — all of these seem to be excluded from the category of holy war.

Given these requirements, Laurent maintained that only Islamic *jihad* was a true holy war ([11]). In contrast, crusade was "strictly preventive and defensive" ([12]). Following contemporary historians of canon law, he stressed a difference between Muslim and Christian theories of holy war. In Islam, *jihad*, an obligation to fight holy war against those outside the "House of Islam", arose early and found its justification in the prophet's revelation and the actions of the earliest caliphs. In contrast, Christian canon law in the Middle Ages, hardly able to use Jesus' words or his disciples' actions as a call to war, presented the crusade as a just war, aimed only at recovering lands which rightfully belonged to Christians, protecting persecuted Christians, and preventing the further spread of Islam ([13]). Nevertheless, Laurent did admit that, whatever the differences in official doctrine, the two were, in practice, much alike. They used "similar means ... to arouse the enthusiasm of combatants or to stir up the interest of lords and princes...". More importantly, they shared a "fundamental trait..., the theory of martyrdom in which heaven — an immediate and glorious heaven — is offered to whoever dies in battle against the infidel" ([14]).

As for Byzantium, Laurent argued that the Byzantines had no idea of holy war because of flaws in their character : cowardice, pedantry, fatalism, "moral inertia", and other traits familiar to readers of Edward Gibbon. Confronted with the threat of Islam, Laurent wrote, medieval Christianity reacted in two ways. First, there was the "negative" attitude of Byzantium, "obstinately refusing to fight for its faith". Then there was the "dynamic" solution of the West, which managed to make up for Byzantium's "deficiency" ([15]).

For the purposes of this essay, two features of Laurent's analysis are important. First, he delineates several criteria for holy war : God's command, the enemy's irreligion, constant struggle, popular support, and a belief in heavenly rewards. Second, he insists that Byzantium met none of these requirements and waged nothing resembling a holy war. We will return to these points.

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(11) *Ibid.*
(12) *Ibid.*, p. 77.
(13) *Ibid.*
(14) *Ibid.*, p. 78.
(15) *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 86, 92.

Several later scholars agreed with Laurent's conclusion — that Byzantines had no idea of holy war — but disagreed with his reasoning, especially with his assessment of Byzantine character. For example, the first quotation at the head of this essay comes from Paul Lemerle's article, *Byzance et la croisade*. In spite of his sweeping statement about Greeks having no idea whatsoever of holy war, Lemerle did not define holy war in general. He argued only that Byzantines had no idea of crusade. He defined crusade as a military pilgrimage to deliver the Holy Land and eastern Christians, under the authority of the Church as openly declared by a papal bull, with specific temporal and spiritual benefits for participants. That Byzantium had no such idea needed no further argument and therefore, he urged, we should not speak of Byzantine "crusades" : "To use metaphorically [*littérairement, avec valeur d'image*] terms which must have a very precise meaning, brings only confusion, not enlightenment, to historical problems" ([16]). In spite of a certain level of agreement with Laurent, Lemerle explicitly disagreed with Laurent's statements about Byzantine character : "This [absence of a crusade idea] among them is not the result of 'moral inertia', but an unchanging and specific property of Greek orthodoxy" ([17]). In this last statement, Lemerle raised the issue which has dominated the historiography of Byzantium and the crusades since : namely, that fundamental features of the ideology and institutions of the Greek East prevented the development of a crusading ideal. We will return to this point.

Following Laurent, Lemerle, and others, few historians would today agree with Schlumberger or with Ostrogorsky's claim of a "veritable crusading spirit". But one can deny that Byzantine wars were, in any sense, crusades, while maintaining nevertheless that they were a different, uniquely Byzantine sort of holy war. Among those who make an intelligent, well-reasoned argument for the existence of a particular *genre* of holy war in Byzantium is Athena Kolia-Dermitzakè ([18]). In her recent book, she criticizes the many discussions of Byzantine "holy war" which take western crusade as the model — as if the only kind of holy war was the crusade. Using Islamic *jihad* as her other example,

(16) LEMERLE, *Byzance et la croisade*, p. 614, n. 1.
(17) *Ibid.*, p. 618. "Moral inertia" is LAURENT's phrase, *L'idée de guerre sainte*, p. 92.
(18) Ὁ βυζαντινὸς «ἱερὸς πόλεμος». Ἡ ἔννοια καὶ ἡ προβολὴ τοῦ θρησκευτικοῦ πολέμου στὸ Βυζάντιο, Athens, 1991.

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she argues convincingly that different societies can develop different kinds of holy war.

Beginning with a discussion of the precise features of crusade and *jihad*, Kolia-Dermitzakè goes on to argue that Byzantium, too, had a form of holy war, which both resembled and differed from the other two. She is explicit about the characteristics which make some Byzantine wars holy wars : the enemy must be non-Christian ; the enemy must have persecuted Christians in some way ; and the territories fought over must have been part of the Roman empire at some point, so that the *casus belli* could be recovery of what was rightfully the empire's territory ([19]). Less explicit, but also clear in Kolia-Dermitzakè's argument is the assumption that holy wars must be offensive. For example, she says that the Byzantine wars against Islam before 740 cannot be called holy wars because they were defensive ([20]). The ideology behind Byzantine holy wars further emphasized their religious character, presenting God as the head of the army, Byzantines as God's chosen people, and emperors and generals as descendants of Moses and Joshua. In the army, prayers, religious services, and speeches assured soldiers that they were fighting for God and would be rewarded in heaven if they died in such a fight. All of this rested on the fundamental elements of Byzantine political ideology, in which the emperor is God's vicar and the protector of Christians : "From this *Kaiseridee* — a theory that goes back to the 4th [*sic*] century — originates the competence of the emperor to proclaim such a 'holy war', a war that was a political and not an ecclesiastical affair, as was the case in the West" ([21]).

Thus Kolia-Dermitzakè outlines a series of criteria which make a war holy both in the eyes of its participants and in the definitions of historians. It must be commanded by God. The enemy must be defined as religiously different — as infidel or heretic. The soldiers

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(19) Again, note that similar themes underlay western crusade. Canon lawyers and others argued that crusade was a just war because it sought only to avenge injury, to protect Christians, and to recover lands which rightfully belonged to Christians. Although this was not the only current of thought in the West, it was an important one. *Locus classicus* : C. ERDMANN, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. M. W. BALDWIN and W. GOFFART, Princeton 1977. Revision and updated biography in J. GILCHRIST, *The Erdmann Thesis and the Canon Law, 1083-1141*, in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. P. W. EDBURY, Cardiff 1985, pp. 37-45.

(20) KOLIA-DERMITZAKÈ, pp. 187ff.

(21) *Ibid.*, pp. 401-402.

must believe that God will reward them for their fighting on his behalf, especially if they die in battle. Finally, defensive wars do not qualify. She argues that Byzantium meets all of these criteria in its own particular ways, which are intertwined with Byzantine political theory. The Byzantine *genre* of holy war differs from *jihad* and crusade, as the two differ from each other, because it is the product of a different society with a different history.

More recently, A. E. Laiou published an article entitled, *On Just War in Byzantium* [22]. Laiou does not define holy war, *per se*. She accomplishes a more specific, less comparative task : namely, posing the question of how Byzantines justified their wars, and doing so primarily through a close study of the Princess Anna Komnena's *Alexiad*. Nevertheless, I include Laiou's article in this brief historiographical sketch because she begins by stating that Byzantine wars were not holy wars because holy war "must be promulgated by a religious authority, which is also the sole authority capable of granting remission of sins or declaring the warriors martyrs" [23]. Thus, although Anna presents her father as "almost a martyr, almost equal to the apostles, a Christlike figure..." [24], his wars are just wars, not holy wars. Again in the conclusion of her article, Laiou stresses that the essential difference between east and west is that "there never was a question in Byzantium as to who was the authority competent to wage war" [25]. Since church authorities did not declare war in Byzantium, the war was not a holy war. She writes that Anna "... and her father were certain he was a Christian ruler waging a just war ; they would both have been stunned if anyone had suggested that he ever waged a holy war, such as the one that sent the Crusaders east" [26]. Laiou thus considers two criteria essential for holy war : the leadership of a religious authority, and that authority's promise of remission of sins for the warriors. She also notes that Anna presents Alexios' wars as purely defensive and for the recovery of territory which rightfully belonged to the empire. That, and the fundamental difference between

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(22) In *To Eλλhnikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr.*, ed J. S. LANGDON *et al.*, New Rochelle - New York 1993, pp. 153-177.
(23) *Ibid.*, p. 153.
(24) *Ibid.*, p. 156.
(25) *Ibid.*, p. 170.
(26) *Ibid.*, p. 171.

Byzantine and crusader ideas about war, lead to Laiou's final assertion that Alexios waged nothing like a holy war.

Finally, Nicholas Oikonomidès has recently asserted that "Byzantium never knew a real 'holy war'" ([27]). Oikonomidès' criteria for holy war are explicit and familiar : a holy war must be declared by a religious authority, not a secular one ; and participants must be promised "extraordinary spiritual advantages" (*i.e.*, indulgences, martyr's status) ([28]). The role of religious authorities seems to be the most important issue for Oikonomidès. He repeatedly stresses that "the official position of the Byzantine church" did not include promising soldiers spiritual rewards for falling in battle ([29]) and that "the official Byzantine church shied away from the idea of a war of religion" ([30]).

Oikonomidès clearly does not mean that war in Byzantium can be separated from religion. On the contrary, he argues that "... religion played an important role in defining the military ideology of the Byzantines, but in a very particular way, typical of their unique character" ([31]). With Kolia-Dermitzakè, he argues that "The ideology that supported war had to be related to the empire and to its personification, the emperor, theoretically appointed by Christ to reign on earth. War was thus placed in the general framework of imperial ideology" ([32]). But he objects to her conclusion that some Byzantine wars are therefore holy wars : "But, as far as I can see, it has not been shown in any convincing way how the purported Byzantine holy war differed essentially from a 'normal' war ; would the only difference be the degree to which reference is made to religion, the insistence on this point and nothing more?" ([33]).

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(27) N. Oikonomidès, *The Concept of "Holy War" and Two Tenth-century Byzantine Ivories,* in *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.,* ed. T. S. Miller and J. Nesbitt, Washington D.C. 1995, p. 68.
(28) *Ibid.,* p. 63.
(29) *Ibid.,* p. 67.
(30) *Ibid.,* p. 86.
(31) *Ibid.,* p. 64.
(32) *Ibid.,* p. 62.
(33) *Ibid.,* p. 63.

PART II. — *BYZANTINE HOLY WAR : DEFINITIONS*

From this discussion of historiography, a number of possible definitions of holy war and a number of different characterizations of Byzantium emerge. Clearer than these definitions, however, is the realization that a definition of holy war which would be accepted once and for all has not and never will be achieved. Therefore it may be more useful to approach the Byzantine ideologies associated with warfare and religion from a different angle. One can use the definitions and criteria proposed by previous scholars and yet cut the Gordian Knot by asking a slightly different question. Instead of asking *whether* Byzantium had a notion of holy war, one could ask *in what ways* Byzantine wars were perceived by their participants as divinely ordained, aided, and rewarded. To answer the latter question, one can use the features of holy wars raised in previous historical literature without having to distinguish necessary features from secondary ones. To describe Byzantium in relation to these criteria will give only a relativist answer : Byzantium had *an* idea of holy war. It was not the only possible idea of holy war, but it enabled Byzantines to understand the crusades rather better than has generally been acknowledged.

In the following section of this essay, then, I discuss how some of the assertions about holy war discussed above apply to Byzantium.

**A holy war is fought at God's command.**

This characteristic of holy war can take many forms. If we insist that holy war is fought at the direct command of God, few wars would qualify — the Hebrew wars of the Bible and early Muslim *jihad*, and perhaps no others. If, on the other hand, one accepts that the command of God, as understood by combatants, can come through his human servants, then crusades are also holy wars. When Pope Urban II preached at Clermont, and his audience shouted "God wills it !", their belief that the pontiff spoke on God's behalf was clear. Along the way, too, the participants in the First Crusade were repeatedly reminded in visions and dreams that God had ordered their mission.

Perhaps the lack of such direct, revelatory commands from God explains the common assertion that Byzantine wars are not holy wars. However, the lack of explicit, enthusiastic and prophetic experiences in this area is balanced, as so often is the case, by a deep, abiding conviction that this Christian Roman Empire is God's special creation.

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The emperor, as God's vicar, is the protector of the Christian people. His protection includes military defense, enforcement of laws, endowment of churches, and many other tasks. The emperor's wars are God's work because all of his deeds are God's work (34).

Thus we find in this matter, as we will in others below, that Byzantium resembles its neighbors and yet is different. It shares with them a Judeo-Christian heritage, especially the Hebrew Scriptures, which provides certain ideas, images, and justifications for holy war. Like western Christians and Muslims, Byzantine writers compare themselves to God's Chosen People, their wars to the wars of Israel, their rulers to the kings of Israel, and so on. But each of these three medieval cultures adopts, adapts, and interprets this heritage from Moses and Joshua in a different way. Byzantium's way is part and parcel of the eastern Empire's sense of continuous history and imperial grandeur, and that part of its heritage is not shared with its eastern or western neighbors.

**A holy war is fought against "infidels" or "heretics" ; that is to say, opponents are defined in religious terms.**

Mohammed and his successors enjoined war against those who did not accept the prophet's message, for they were the well-defined infidel. From the eleventh century on, popes promulgated wars against those who did accept the prophet's message, for they were the well-defined infidel. On a few occasions, Byzantine emperors — or at least their chroniclers — also emphasized the religious difference of their opponents. So, for example, the seventh-century chronicler Theophanes claims that the Emperor Herakleios (610-641) fought the Persians because they threatened Christians and that he spoke to his soldiers of these "infidel" (35). The *Chronicon Paschale*, another seventh-century source, speaks even more frequently of the Persians and Avars as "accursed", "impious" enemies (36).

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(34) See, for example, the views expressed in Constantine Porphyrogenetos' imperial harangue to his army : H. AHRWEILER, *Un discours inédit de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète*, in *TM* 2 (1967), pp. 393-404.

(35) *E.g.*, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, trans. H. TURTLEDOVE, Philadelphia 1982, pp.14 (Annus Mundi 6113) and 16 (AM 6114).

(36) *E.g.*, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628 A.D.*, trans. M. WHITBY and M. WHITBY, Liverpool 1989, pp. 169-170 and 183-186.

Yet there is no denying that most Byzantine material gives little such sense of the enemy as infidel. For example, Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos' book of advice to his son, *De administrando imperio*, contains few references to the religion of various enemies and allies of the Empire. Even when Constantine discusses the religion of foreigners, that religion is not sufficient reason to go to war against them. How the emperor should treat Russians, Pechenegs, Arabs, or southern Italians depends on the relative strength of the groups, on their relations with one another, and above all on what danger or advantage each offers to the empire ([37]).

So most Byzantine wars are not seen as wars against infidel or heretics. But some are. In this context, it seems worth noting that neither Muslims nor western Christians fought all wars against the infidel, either. Once more, we recognize a fundamental similarity among the three societies and a fundamental particularity in Byzantium. The similarity is still their Biblical heritage. Byzantines are familiar with the idea that God's people ought to fight infidels; they get it from the same sources as Muslims and western Christians do. Yet Byzantines do not adopt this idea and consistently apply it to their own situation, while Islam and western Christianity do. Explaining this difference is beyond the scope of this essay, for it would require a comparative survey of the history of all three societies. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that the difference exists.

**The fighters believe that God will reward them for their work on his behalf. They may also have more specific beliefs about rewards; for example, that the reward for death in battle against the infidel is remission of one's sins and immediate entrance to heaven.**

Crusade and *jihad* obviously fit this criterion. To put it more accurately, crusade and *jihad* supply this criterion. This is not an idea directly inherited from the Scriptures, but rather an idea whose provenance is debatable. In the Latin West, perhaps it comes from Germanic ideas of a paradise for warriors; in Islam, perhaps from early Arabian notions. However that may be, both Christian preachers

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(37) See, for example, Constantine's analysis of how to handle the Pechenegs, which includes no mention of their religious beliefs. CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. MORAVCSIK, trans. R. J. H. JENKINS, new revised ed., Washington D.C. 1967, pp. 48-53, ch. 1-5.

of crusade and Islamic promulgators of *jihad* promised the status of martyrs to those who died in battle against the infidel ([38]).

It is usually argued that Byzantium had no such idea. The eastern church remained ambivalent about the soldier's role. Always cited in this context is the case of Nikephoros Phokas (963-969). A great military emperor, Phokas successfully took the initiative against the Arabs in Asia Minor. As discussed above, his wars came so close to meeting all the crusade-based criteria for a holy war that Gustave Schlumberger portrayed him as a sort of proto-crusader. As brilliant generals must, Phokas also successfully inspired his soldiers, in part by persuading them that they were fighting for God's glory and their own salvation. Or so it seems, for he asked the patriarch to grant the title of martyrs to his soldiers who died in battle with the infidel. The patriarch and his synod refused, citing the thirteenth canon of St. Basil :

> Our Fathers did not consider killings in war to be murders, but, in my opinion, pardoned those who fight in defense of virtue and piety. Still, it is perhaps well to advise them to abstain only from communion for three years, since their hands are not clean ([39]).

This decisive rejection of Nikephoros Phokas' request for ecclesiastical support has been cited again and again to show that Byzantines simply could not conceive of the sort of holy war that the West was developing at the same time.

So, too, we have historical accounts of military commanders who stressed the religious aspect of battles in their pre-battle motivational speeches. "In some cases these commanders may have gone further than what was admissible for the Byzantine church. They may have tried to give to the upcoming fight the character of a holy war, where special compensation would be given by God to those who fell." Like

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(38) One of hundreds of examples : BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. C. GRḁ ENIA, in *Treatises III*, Kalamazoo 1977, p. 130.

(39) BASIL THE GREAT *Amphilochio de canonibus*, Letter 188, canon 13, ed. Y. COURTONNE, *Saint Basile, Lettres*, vol. 2, Paris 1961, p.130 ; PG 32, 681/682. — The story of Phokas' request and the patriarch's denial comes from Joannes SKYLITZES, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. THURN, Vienna (CFHB) 1973, pp. 273-275. See also, V. GRUMEL, *Les régestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, I (*Les actes des patriarches*), fasc. II, Paris 1936, 790. — For a recent assessment of Nikephoros Phokas see R. MORRIS, *The Two Faces of Nickephoros Phokas* in *BMGS* 12 (1988), pp. 83-115.

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Phokas, however, these military commanders are considered anoma-
lous ; their "excesses of language, although certainly very well received
by the troops, did not by any means reflect or even coincide in the
least with the official position of the Byzantine church" [40].

The logic of these arguments is, however, flawed. The first assumes
that the patriarch and his synod represent Byzantine attitudes in
general, while Phokas is an eccentric emperor who does not quite think
like a Byzantine should. The second also privileges the "official" position
of the Church over evidence that many people within that Church,
including some who could claim "official" status of their own, shared
Phokas' attitude. Yet there were many Byzantines, and Byzantine
ideologies were only slightly more monolithic than western ones.
Phokas' position may have been common and popular — at least in
certain areas of the empire. In their edition of a military treatise
attributed to Phokas, G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu argue that this
treatise, which presents imperial soldiers as protectors and liberators
of the Christian world ($\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\alpha\nu\iota\kappa\grave{o}\nu$ $\pi\lambda\acute{\eta}\rho\omega\mu\alpha$, $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\upsilon\mu\sigma\varsigma$ $\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\varsigma$),
reflects a frontier *mentalité*, perhaps even a general military *mentalité*.
The idea of imperial soldiers as martyrs for the faith, although "a
scandal" to the patriarch and his synod in their secure fortress on the
Bosphorus, was "implanted on the frontier" and promulgated in
Byzantine military manuals [41]. Dagron and Mihaescu play down the
highly publicized rejection of Phokas' request, and pay close attention
to the evidence we have for what soldiers were actually being told
on a daily basis. In other words, we should ask not only what the
patriarch thought the ideology of the army ought to be, but what the
ideology of the army actually was.

When we look at the evidence of Byzantine military manuals, we
see an army in which soldiers are required to attend religious services
twice a day [42]. We read imperial instructions to commanders and
imperial harangues to the army which emphasize that soldiers who
die in battle are "perpetually blessed" and that they fight "for the
salvation of the soul" [43]. Theophanes records that Herakleios once

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(40) OIKONOMIDÈS, *The Concept of "Holy War"*, pp. 66-67.

(41) *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-
969)*, Paris 1986, pp. 284-286.

(42) J.-R. VIEILLEFOND, *Les pratiques religieuses dans l'armée byzantine d'après
les traités militaires*, in *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 37 (1935), pp. 324-325.

(43) DAGRON and MIHAESCU, pp. 285-286, citing the *Taktika* of Leo VI.

addressed his soldiers as follows :

> Brothers, do not be troubled by your enemies' numbers for, God
> willing, one will chase thousands. Let us sacrifice ourselves to God for
> the salvation of our brothers. Let us take the martyrs' crown so the
> future will applaud us and God will give us our reward ([44]).

Constantine Porphyrogenetos sent to his army holy water blessed by
having touched the relics of Christ's Passion, assuring them that, when
sprinkled on them, the water would give them strength and courage
from heaven ([45]). Examples such as this could be multiplied. Imperial
soldiers were thus regularly assured of God's presence and protection.
They were also promised that he would reward them for their service.
Thus seventh-century and tenth-century Byzantine soldiers had ideas
of eternal reward not unlike that of eleventh-century crusaders. Later
on, contact with western and eastern peoples who had developed ideas
of military martyrdom undoubtedly influenced Byzantine soldiers, as
well ([46]).

**A holy war is declared and/or promulgated by a religious authority
— pope, caliph, or prophet, for example. A war declared by a secular
authority — e.g., an emperor — is not a holy war.**

As Laiou notes, this requirement is met in both the Latin West and
the Islamic East : the pope promulgates crusades ; the caliph calls for
*jihad*. In Byzantium, the emperor alone can declare a war. The
difference seems clear. The worlds of medieval Islam and medieval
western Christendom were characterized by political disunity. As a
result, only a particular religious leader could unite all the faithful
against the infidel. In contrast, the greater political unity, continuity,
and power of the eastern empire enabled the emperor to unite his
Christian people. As a corollary, it was seldom necessary for the
patriarch to step in as a leader of the defense, as western popes and

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(44) *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 19 (AM 6115).
(45) H. AHRWEILER, *Un discours inédit de Constantin VII*, p. 397.
(46) See N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôreianos*,
in *REB* 25 (1967), pp. 113-145 (reprinted in IDEM, *Documents et études sur les
institutions de Byzance (VIIᵉ-XVᵉ s.)*, London 1976, art. XV). Oikonomidès argues that
one of these patriarchal acts, in which the patriarch promises forgiveness of sins to
soldiers who died in battle, was influenced by western models (pp. 115-121 and 131-
135).

bishops did from the time of Gregory I (590-604). The patriarch helped motivate people for war. He supported the efforts of the armies with chaplains, prayers, and blessings. But he did not declare war ; that was the emperor's prerogative.

But was the emperor a secular authority and not a religious one? Were the pope and the caliph religious authorities and not secular ones? On the contrary, all three societies lacked absolute distinctions between religious institutions and state institutions. Both the caliphate and the papacy performed functions which, in other societies, are performed by the state. So, too, the Byzantine emperors and their state apparatus performed functions which other societies have reserved to religious authorities. To call the Byzantine emperor a purely secular figure is equivalent to calling the pope or caliph a purely religious one. He is the vicar of Christ, God's representative on earth, a man anointed (almost ordained) into a sacred office — arguably the most sacred office in the Empire. As Kolia-Dermitzakè puts it, in its holy wars the West had "the leadership and participation of the Church on the one hand, the remission of sins on the other", while Byzantium had "the inseparable unity of Christianity and 'Romanism', which resulted in the particular position of the emperor as motivator and leader of wars with a proclaimed religious aim" ([47]).

**Holy war is offensive war, and it aims to convert, to exterminate, or to subjugate the infidel.**

This idea, based on the models of crusade and *jihad*, presupposes a certain relationship between holy warriors and their neighbors — a relationship which the Byzantine Empire did not have. In order to go on the offensive, a society must not spend all its resources on defense. It must have the manpower and material means to move outward — a luxury the Christian West had precisely because the Christian East served as a buffer. Byzantium was on the defensive for most of its history. If we accept that holy war must be offensive, then we might concede that a few of Byzantium's military campaigns resembled holy wars (Herakleios against the Persians, Nikephoros Phokas and Ioannes Tzimiskes against the Arabs), but we would have to conclude that most did not, since most wars fought with adherents of other religions were defensive.

(47) KOLIA-DERMITZAKÈ, p. 408.

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Yet subjects of the Byzantine Empire were themselves convinced of the holiness of their struggle against the infidel. They believed that God was on their side. They processed around the walls with icons to protect their cities in time of siege ([48]). They prayed to God for victory and praised him when they won. The holiness of their struggle permeated defensive wars as much as offensive ones, for "they considered themselves ... the new Chosen People, their empire ... the designated defender of Christianity, their state and their army ... the chosen instrument of God against his enemies, the infidel..." ([49]). In such a context, to deny the defensive wars of Byzantium the status of "holy wars" is counter-intuitive — a result, again, of reducing the general category of "holy war" to the specific sub-categories of *jihad* and crusade.

**Holy war must be spontaneous and popular.**

That holy war must be a product of popular enthusiasm is usually assumed, not stated explicitly. As noted above, however, Vitalien Laurent does make it explicit, both in praise of the Latin crusader and in deprecation of the passive Byzantine :

> The Greek of the Middle Ages was, in fact, a pure intellectual, hardly anxious to fight for his ideas. At the most critical moments — after Amorion, Manzikert, or Myriokephalon — when the Muslim victory seemed total, the nation never roused itself as did the French for Bouvines and Valmy or other peoples for liberty ([50]).

If we overlook the anachronism inherent in words such as "nation" and "liberty" in this context, and the stereotype of the Greek who would rather quibble about words than defend his people, Laurent has a point. In this matter, Byzantium does differ from its neighbors. The popular millenarianism that preceded the First Crusade, the prophecies of Peter the Hermit, even the pogroms in the Rhineland — all of these mob actions show that crusade appealed to all levels of society. *Jihad*, too, at least in its early days, harnessed popular enthusiasm. In contrast, despite rare examples of a high degree of

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(48) For examples, see J. HERRIN, *The Formation of Christendom*, Princeton 1987, pp. 306-307, 314-315, and the sources cited there.

(49) AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1975, p. 35.

(50) LAURENT, *L'idée de guerre sainte*, p. 83.

popular support for imperial wars against the infidel, Byzantines did not rally 'round the cross as their crusader-cousins did. As a result, it is easy to argue that the military manuals and imperial harangues mentioned above are mere propaganda, with little or no reflection in popular attitudes.

Unfortunately, a kind of romanticism has crept into this argument. It assumes that dedication to a cause is somehow more substantial if it springs from momentary excitement or enthusiasm than if it springs from daily indoctrination. In this view, Byzantine soldiers were less certain of their divine mission because they did not manifest the fervor which characterized crusaders. Yet if Byzantine soldiers were attending two religious services a day, then Christianity was part of their socialization into the army — one might even say their indoctrination. To argue that such indoctrination could not have led to genuine devotion to the cause is analogous to arguing that since modern soldiers are drilled into submission and indoctrinated with nationalist ideas, their nationalism is neither genuine nor heartfelt. On the contrary, the power of ideologies taught in this way can be great, and irony about nationalism is rare among a nation's soldiers.

In the end, then, our picture of Byzantium's wars is mixed. On the one hand, Byzantines did fight wars which they believed were divinely ordained and would be divinely rewarded. They sometimes defined their enemies in religious terms. They sometimes compared their leaders to prophets and themselves to the Chosen People of Israel. Most importantly, the ideology of the Byzantine Empire was based on a conviction that this empire was God's creation, the fulfillment of his will for earthly rule. This Christian Roman Empire, with God's vicar anointed at its head, did God's work on earth. Its soldiers therefore fought for God when they fought to protect or to expand the empire. It seems illogical to dismiss all of this as not really holy war.

Yet this Byzantine species of holy war differs greatly from both *jihad* and crusade. Those who have stressed these differences are correct in their insistence on the particularity of Byzantium. Byzantine wars, even when fought against the infidel, lacked the sort of religious enthusiasms — visions and trances, millenial excitement, fasting and flagellation — which are so familiar to crusade historians. Byzantine armies were not all-volunteer armies, as crusading armies were. Inasmuch as the Byzantine state was stronger, the role of the church in Byzantium's wars was less. Byzantine foreign policy, complex and multi-faceted,

seldom defined the enemy by his infidel status alone. Many kinds of
infidel enemies, who had to be used against one another, gave
Byzantines a more relativist view of non-Christians than their western
cousins had. Perhaps most importantly, warfare lacked the cultural
weight in Byzantium that it carried in the West. Chivalric heroes such
as Roland or the Cid, the glory of the fearless charge against all odds,
the idea that it was better to die bravely than to live to fight another
day — these are western notions, rarely encountered in Byzantium,
and certainly not central to the culture of Byzantine elites as they were
to the culture of western elites ([51]).

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PART III. — *BYZANTINE HOLY WAR AND THE CRUSADES*

Today historians agree that Byzantines did not fight crusades. With
Paul Lemerle, current historiography would limit the term crusade to
specific institutional forms, especially papal authority and belief in
indulgences ([52]). Most historians go a step further ; they insist that
Byzantines also did not comprehend the Latin phenomenon. In the
final section of this paper, I want to investigate this second statement
— not because it is not fundamentally correct, but rather because it
has been insufficiently defined. The generalization that Byzantines just
did not understand crusade and were appalled by it is ubiquitous.
Specific analysis of what appalled them, when and why, is rare ([53]).

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(51) For a succinct discussion of this issue, see T. S. MILLER, *Introduction* in *Peace
and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.*, ed. T. S. MILLER
and J. NESBITT, Washington D.C. 1995, pp. 6-8.

(52) Most crusade historians do insist on papal authority and other specifically
western features of crusade, and I agree with them. Laiou and Lemerle have already
been cited above to this effect. Byzantine wars — even the most religiously charged
of them — differ from western crusades in many fundamental ways, including the
role of the pope, the belief in crusade indulgences, and the mass of canon law which
eventually developed to justify them. Still, it is interesting that J. RILEY-SMITH's recent,
rather minimalist definition of crusade would fit some Byzantine wars : "A crusade
was a holy war fought against those perceived to be the external or internal foes
of Christendom for the recovery of Christian property or in defense of the Church
or Christian people" (*The Crusades. A Short History*, New Haven 1987, p. XXVIII).

(53) Exceptions include nearly all aspects of R.-J. LILIE's analysis in *Byzantium
and the Crusader States 1096-1204*, trans. J. C. MORRIS and J. E. RIDINGS, Oxford
1993 ; and P. MAGDALINO's discussion of Alexios I's reaction to the First Crusade
in *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 27-34.

The first part of this paper established that Byzantines were familiar with the idea of God commanding a war against the infidel and promising his soldiers rewards in the hereafter. They shared these ideas with western Christians. Nevertheless, Byzantine writers did respond to the crusades with horror and disgust even before the crusade was used as a weapon against them. If they did not object to holy war *per se*, to what did they object?

The Byzantine writer most frequently cited in this context is the Princess Anna Komnena — and with good reason. As an eyewitness of the First Crusade, Anna provides us with the earliest descriptions of the crusaders and with the earliest Byzantine version of what they were doing and why. She is horrified by the crusaders' conduct, and she makes little effort to understand their motives and ideals. Nevertheless — and this is an important point, seldom noted — she never says that the Latins were wrong to launch a war against the infidel for the recovery of the Holy Land. She is not uncomprehending of the whole idea of a holy war against Islam ; she simply does not believe that the Latin knights have come to fight such a war.

Given Anna's importance as a source and her omnipresence in the historical literature, some of what I have to say here will not be news to Byzantine historians. Still, I think one more analysis of Anna's reaction to the First Crusade is worthwhile, for accounts of her attitude toward the crusaders tend to concentrate on her disgusted fascination with Bohemond and to generalize about her "incomprehension" of the crusaders' motives. Missing in such accounts is a record of her rather specific complaints about the crusaders. Her contempt for them is not generic ; it has three specific components. First, both the ·masses of the People's Crusade and the soldiers of the main armies are barbarians. Anna's description of the beginning of the First Crusade is a description of a barbarian tribe invading a civilized land :

> ... The whole of the west and all the barbarians who lived between the Adriatic and Straits of Gibraltar migrated in a body to Asia.. Full of enthusiasm and ardor [aroused by the preaching of Peter the Hermit] they thronged every highway, and with these warriors came a host of civilians, outnumbering the sand of the sea shore or the stars of heaven.. The arrival of this mighty host was preceded by locusts, which abstained from the wheat but made frightful inroads on the vines... [54].

(54) *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans.E. R. A. SEWTER, New York 1969, book 10, part 5, pp. 308-309.

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They could be almost any barbarians of any age, motivated, as barbarians are, by inexplicable enthusiasms, travelling in numberless hordes, and bringing with them plagues of insects. Not only do they enter in vast numbers, as barbarians always do, but they also share all of the other traits of barbarians. They are fickle, emotional, violent, insolent, superstitious — in a word, uncivilized ([55]). These hordes threaten the Empire, but not because of their religious fervor. Indeed, Anna notes their religious ardor without criticizing it : "The simpler folk were in very truth led on by a desire to worship at Our Lord's tomb and visit the holy places..." ([56]). So far, then, Anna's reaction to the crusaders is to fit them into a mental category which she shared with most Byzantine writers of her age : they are barbarians — dangerous representatives and carriers of chaos — but they are not heretics and their idea of going to Jerusalem is not dismissed by an uncomprehending Byzantine princess.

   Second, Anna impugns the motives of the leaders of the crusade. So she contrasts "the simpler folk" and their genuine desire to see the holy places with "... the more villainous characters (in particular Bohemond and his like) [who] had an ulterior purpose, for they hoped on their journey to seize the capital itself, looking upon its capture as a natural consequence of the expedition" ([57]). Some have said that this suspicion results from Anna's inability to believe that warriors would travel thousands of miles to restore the Holy Land to Christian hands. There is some truth in this statement ; the impracticality of the crusaders in wishing to march across Islamic Asia Minor in order to establish an outpost in the Holy Land seemed strange to Byzantine emperors, who wanted instead to push the borders of the·empire east from Nicea to its former boundaries. Still, the idea of recovering Jerusalem was not entirely alien to Byzantines, nor were Byzantines immune to the religious charms of Jerusalem, even if they were less prone to millenial enthusiasm about it than their western brothers were ([58]).

   (55) G. BUCKLER, *Anna Comnena. A Study*, London 1929, p. 458.
   (56) *Alexiad,* book 10/6, p. 311.
   (57) *Ibid.*
   (58) For example, although Ioannes Tzimiskes did not capture Jerusalem, and probably did not even try to do so, it is significant that someone considered it worthwhile to claim that he had done so. See *Armenia and the Crusades : tenth to twelfth centuries : the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A. E. DOSTOURIAN,

But even if Alexios had made recovery of Jerusalem his highest priority, even if he had been willing to attack Palestine while Anatolia remained a Turkish province, he would nevertheless have suspected that the crusaders were really seeking something other than holy places. Quite justifiably, he suspected that the crusaders wanted his throne. Some of the men on the First Crusade had been involved in earlier attacks on the empire. Even before he became emperor, Alexios had fought unsuccessfully against Robert Guiscard's attempts to seize Dyrrachium and the surrounding area. Guiscard intended the lands he gained, including Dyrrachium, to go to his son Bohemond as an inheritance. Unfortunately for Bohemond, Alexios later regained this territory for his empire. Bohemond's inheritance evaporated. He next appeared in Byzantine history as the leader of a band of crusaders. Was Alexios supposed to believe that Bohemond's only interest was a pilgrimage to the Holy Land? On the contrary, he greeted Bohemond and the other crusaders with great caution — not because he could not understand fighting for Jerusalem, but simply because he did not believe that that was what they were doing [59]. His daughter both shared and praised his suspicion.

Finally, Anna is horrified by clergy on the crusade who bear arms and fight with the rest of the army. Byzantine disapproval of Latin clerics and their participation in battle precedes Anna. In 1054, Patriarch Michael Keroularios (1043-1058) complained that Latin bishops, "going forth to battle, stain their hands with blood, killing and being killed..." [60]. Although the debate continues about the evolution of opinions of soldiers in the Christian Church, in part because the canonical evidence is mixed, the canonical prohibition of clerical participation in battle is clear. Even when the church became

Lanham, Maryland 1993, pp. 28-33, and the analysis of WALKER (n. 6 above), pp. 326-327.

(59) In other words, I see the suspicion and mistrust as the *first* feature of relations between Alexios and the crusaders, *leading to* a skepticism about the goal of the Holy Land. Ahrweiler and others see a different picture. Ahrweiler writes that the goal of the Holy Land was incomprehensible to the Byzantines. Therefore, they saw that goal as a pretext, masking the real goal, which was to take lands and power away from the Empire. In this view, incomprehension preceded disbelief and mistrust. H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 79-80.

(60) *Michaelis sanctissimi archiepiscopi Constantinopolis novae Romae, et oecumenici patriarchae, Cerularii, ad Petrum sanctissimum patriarchum Theopolis magnae Antiochiae*, para. 13, PG 120, 793/794.

a supporter of Empire, and its thinkers developed theories which allowed Christians to wage a just war, the church did not permit clergy to join the army or soldiers to become clerics. Both Apostolic Canon 83 and the seventh canon of the Council of Chalcedon reflect this prohibition ([61]). In Byzantium, most evidence points to the enforcement of this prohibition right down to the end of the empire ([62]). In the West, however, this prohibition came to be ignored in the early Middle Ages, as bishops who were also secular lords took on military responsibilities, occasionally even leading troops into battle.

Here, then, Anna does show us a fundamental ideological, political, and sociological difference between East and West. That her objections in this area go beyond crusade is clear when we combine her complaints about fighting clergy with her description of Pope Gregory VII, which drips with contempt and sarcasm :

> The abominable pope with his spiritual grace and evangelic peace, this despot, marched to make war on his own kindred with might and main — the man of peace, too, and disciple of the Man of Peace!... It seems that he misunderstood the saying of Paul, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man', for his right hand was only too ready for the laying-on of hands where kings were concerned ([63]).

As discussed above, the continuity of imperial authority in the East meant continuity of the idea that the emperor was the only legitimate

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(61) Ap. Can. 83 : "If any bishop, priest, or deacon is involved in military matters and wishes to hold both a Roman [civil] office and a sacerdotal office, let him be deposed..." (ed. P. Joannou, *Fonti. Fascicolo IX. Disciplina Generale Antiqua ($\mathit{II}^e$-$\mathit{IX}^e$ s.),* vol. 1, part 2 : *Les canons des synodes particuliers,* Rome 1962, p. 50). — Chalcedon 7 : "We have decreed that those who have been enrolled in the clergy or have become monks shall not join the army or obtain any secular office. Let those who dare to do this and will not repent be anathema..." (ed. P. Joannou, *Fonti. Fascicolo IX. Disciplina Generale Antiqua ($\mathit{II}^e$-$\mathit{IX}^e$ s.),* vol. 1, part 1 : *Les canons des conciles œcuméniques,* Rome 1962, p. 75).

(62) *E.g.,* Demetrios Chomatianos, a thirteenth-century bishop, despite his general reluctance to defrock clergy without weighty cause, ruled that a cleric who had fought in defense of his city and killed many of the enemy must be defrocked. Records of Chomatianos's legal decisions in J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra et classica spicilegio Solesmensi parata,* VII (VI), Rome 1891 (repr. Farnborough 1967), no.75, pp. 323-326. This case cited and paraphrased in M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni 1081-1261,* Cambridge 1995, p. 250. — For another, earlier example, see P. Viscuso, *Christian Participation in Warfare. A Byzantine View,* in *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.,* ed. T. S. Miller and J. Nesbitt, Washington D.C. 1995, pp. 33-49.

(63) *Alexiad,* book 1/13, pp. 63-64.

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authority to declare war. Byzantium's bishops and patriarchs were seldom forced to take on the sorts of secular responsibilities, including military defense, which popes and bishops in the West assumed. As a result, Byzantines viewed the secular power and claims to secular power of the popes with something akin to horror. "Thus the crusade,... launched by the pope, was above all for the Byzantines a symbol of the usurpation of imperial power by the spiritual leader, who thus committed a quasi-sacrilege" ([64]).

So Anna's fundamental misunderstanding is not an inability to understand holy war. She notes that the crusaders claimed to be waging such a war ; if she had been appalled at the very idea, she would have said so. Instead, she complains about barbarism, deception and hypocrisy, a specific violation of canon law, and ecclesiastical usurpation of imperial powers. She does not maintain that fighting for Christianity is wrong ; she merely contends that the barbarian Franks are not fighting for Christianity and that their priests and bishops pollute themselves when they take up the sword.

In general, the princess' three complaints about crusaders also dominate later Byzantine accounts. Reading the secondary literature, however, one might expect a fourth criticism of the crusade to appear from the beginning : namely, the Latin idea, based on the crusading indulgence, that soldiers killed in battle are martyrs. The difference between East and West in this matter is important ; it has, however, been exaggerated. As illustrated by Theophanes, Nikephoros Phokas and others, Byzantium was not entirely unfamiliar with the idea that soldiers who fight for God will be rewarded in paradise.

More importantly, as far as I know, no Byzantine author before 1204 complains about the crusade indulgence. I suspect that the idea of holy soldier-martyrs passed relatively unnoticed in the early crusades because it was not a completely alien concept. Also, the full import of a Latin doctrine could remain unknown in the East for decades, especially when that doctrine was continually changing, as the doctrine of indulgences was ([65]). After 1204, however, Byzantine authors begin

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(64) AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique*, p. 79.

(65) An analogous example : the Latin doctrine of Purgatory developed out of traditions which were, in part, shared by eastern and western Christians. But it developed without eastern knowledge and understanding so that when, in 1231, a Greek first confronted the full Latin doctrine, he was horrified. See R. OMBRES, *Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory, 1230-1439*, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*

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to note this Latin development and to denounce it. For example, Constantine Stilbes, a distinguished intellectual in Constantinople, witnessed the sack of the city in 1204. Shortly thereafter, he wrote a list of Latin religious errors and military atrocities (66). His sixty-first complaint (out of seventy-five) is that "They maintain that those who are killed in battle are saved, and they say that they immediately enter heaven, even if they fell while fighting because of avarice, blood-lust, or some other excess of evil" (67). The complaint refers to crusading indulgences and probably more generally to the statements of crusade preachers, who were not always completely scrupulous about the details of canon law and the opinions of the theologians. Stilbes distorts the Latin doctrine, for even the most enthusiastic crusade preacher should have denied that death during a fight inspired by avarice was meritorious.

In any case, the essential fact is the context in which Stilbes writes. One might well doubt that he would have complained about the idea of spiritually meritorious death in battle if the battles had continued to be against infidel. By the time he writes, however, he has seen Latin battles directed against his people, his city, himself. The Latin idea that death in battle can be meritorious cannot now be separated from their idea that battle against "schismatic" Greeks is also meritorious. We might note that as his sixtieth complaint, immediately before the complaint quoted above, Stilbes wrote, "Their bishops, especially the pope, are very well pleased with the slaughter of Christians, and they declare that these murders are the salvation of those who commit them" (68).

Stilbes' complaint about indulgences is one example of a larger phenomenon, the watershed which is the Fourth Crusade. With the atrocities committed in Constantinople, which were, in modern terms, both secular (murder, rape, pillage) and religious (desecrations of churches, destruction of icons, scattering of relics), the Latins ceased to be mere barbarians and became enemies of both empire and faith.

35 (1984), pp. 1-14 ; G. DAGRON, *La perception d'une différence : les débuts de la «Querelle du purgatoire»*, in *15e Congrès international des Études byzantines : Actes*, vol. 4, Athens 1976, pp. 84-92.

    (66) J. DARROUZÈS, ed. and trans., *Le mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins*, in *REB* 21 (1963), pp. 50-100.
    (67) *Ibid.*, p.77 (para. 61).
    (68) *Ibid.* (para. 60).

Of course, this idea did not develop *ex nihilo*. Even before 1204 the Latins were occasionally perceived as a threat to faith or empire. But the events of 1204 intensified the fear and loathing to an immeasurable degree. The sack of the imperial city united concerns about religious differences with concerns about the integrity of the Empire. Latins were now a threat to body and soul, to church and state, to those who valued the empire above all and to those who valued orthodoxy above all ([69]).

In general, when Byzantines looked at crusaders before the traumatic events of 1204, they saw barbarians. As barbarians, the crusaders were dangerously violent and short-tempered ; they were sneaky and not to be trusted ; they had all sorts of other negative traits. As civilized people looking at barbarians, Byzantine writers before 1204 were arrogant and condescending. They were also, in a sense, uncomprehending. But not because they could not understand holy war ; rather, because they could not understand the culture and motivations of these strangers from the West. Nor did they make much effort to do so. Why should one bother to understand barbarians? Before 1204, hostility between Latins and Byzantines was common, but sporadic. Latins were simply one race of enemies in that period — a troublesome race, but no more so than Bulgars, Pechenegs, and Turks. After 1204, Latins had shown themselves to be not only barbarians, but also heretics. Their sack of the city of Constantinople, complete with the desecration of churches and icons, took them beyond the realm of barbarians, whom Byzantine writers always portrayed with a certain condescension and without too much concern for detail, to the realm of heretics, whom Byzantine writers loved to portray in great detail — accurate or not.

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The goal of this paper has not been to describe all aspects of Byzantine attitudes toward war, violence, soldiers, or the West. There are scholars working on these questions, and the conclusions of their work will be invaluable. I have no doubt that they will correct my conclusions or question my definitions in various ways. Still, three

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(69) See AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 108-111 and ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, pp. 10-11 and 506-529.

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broad theses have emerged which seem worth emphasizing by way of conclusion.

First, discussions of Byzantine holy war often fail, despite all protestations to the contrary, to recognize that imperial ideology and religious ideology in Byzantium were inseparable. While it is important to insist that Byzantine wars were neither crusades nor *jihad*, it is also important to see that they are no more purely secular than any other aspect of Byzantine society. Some wars certainly cannot be seen as religious wars in Byzantium ; the near-extermination of the Bulgars under Basil II, for example, was a war against Christians. As such, it was not a holy war ([70]). Still, the West and Islam also had their secular wars. Instead of denying that wars fought by Christian soldiers in defense of a Christian empire against Muslims or polytheists were religious wars, we might concentrate on other tasks : for example, describing and defining religion and the holy as understood by Byzantines, then analyzing the relationship between such an understanding and the *imperium* ([71]). That way lies more understanding and less anachronism.

Second, while Byzantines did not enthusiastically pursue holy war as their neighbors did, they were not "passive", pacifist, or less militarily capable than those same neighbors. One wishes that this idea no longer needed refutation. The progress made in Byzantine military history in the last few decades should have put to rest forever the image of the effeminate Greek trembling before the mighty crusader from the West. Unfortunately, the idea that Byzantines hated war and despised their soldiers keeps reappearing ([72]), as do the consequent positive and

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(70) The difficulty of justifying and explaining the defeat and punishment of the Bulgars within the Christian, Roman ideology of the empire is discussed by AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique*, pp. 140-144 and by KOLIA-DERMITZAKÈ, pp. 310-316.

(71) ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, and MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I,* pp. 267-309, 366-412, are admirable examples of such careful, specific study. The complexity, the fissures within Byzantium, the ambiguity and ambivalence which they describe should make us wary of simple, dualistic descriptions of Byzantine "Caesaropapism" or, on the other hand, "monastic dominance".

(72) *E.g.*, K. ARMSTRONG, *Holy War. The Crusades and their Impact on Today's World*, New York 1988, p. 25 : "In the Greek Orthodox Church of the Byzantine Empire war was always regarded as unchristian and during a campaign a soldier was denied the sacraments. The Byzantines preferred to use mercenaries in their wars rather than allow Greek Christians themselves to fight".

negative conclusions about Byzantine character. On the negative side, Byzantine attitudes can be seen as Laurent's "moral inertia" — a cowardly, fatalistic refusal to risk life and limb for the glorious defense of Christendom ([73]). This is the sort of nonsense which occasionally drove Sir Steven Runciman to polemical over-statement of the opposite point of view. Runciman and others provide the positive interpretation of the supposedly less-warlike Byzantines. In this view, they were simply more civilized and more realistic. They understood, as their Germanic cousins did not, that war was not glorious, but rather a necessary evil, to be avoided, when possible, by diplomacy, tribute, and any other available means. They also understood that the best way to keep Islamic powers at bay was to keep them divided, to play them off against one another. They may therefore have feared that the crusade would dangerously unite these enemies, and cause more war and bloodshed than it would prevent. So, as Runciman would have it, the Byzantines not only dynamically held off the Muslim threat for centuries ; they also did so in spite of the consistently idiotic interventions of crusaders from the West who understood neither the enemy nor their allies ([74]).

Regardless of whether one interprets Byzantine attitudes as realistically peaceable or impractically passive, the distortion remains — a distortion born of simplified categories and inadequate understanding. In place of such simplification, many recent historians have exposed the fissures within Byzantium itself, where Laurent's courtly sycophants who despised military virtues and quibbled about words served at the court of military emperors who fought God's wars and sought martyr's status for their soldiers, and where the "official" Church's firm stand against fighting priests was not unanimously accepted or observed. This ambiguous and ambivalent Byzantium is less appealing to those who want to use Byzantine history for their own polemical purposes. On the other hand, for those who want to understand this intricate and diverse society, a carefully executed portrait in shades of gray is a welcome replacement for the child-like black-and-white sketches of polemicists.

(73) Laurent, *L'idée de guerre sainte*, pp. 92, 72.
(74) See, for example, S. Runciman's analysis of the Second Crusade and Manuel II's treaty with a Turkish prince : *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 2 : *The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East 1100-1187*, Cambridge 1952, p. 275. See also Runciman's oft-quoted conclusion regarding the relative merits of Byzantine struggles against the Muslims versus crusades : *ibid.*, p. 277.

Finally, our own perceptions of Byzantines, Latins, and the crusades is influenced greatly by the Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople in 1204. So was late Byzantine ideology. We must not mistake attitudes from after 1204 for attitudes before. After 1204, Byzantine writers do criticize the crusading sub-species of holy war. They do so, however, not because they do not understand holy wars fought against infidel, but rather because the Latins have treated them as infidel. They cannot see Latin holy wars as holy because they see Latins as heretics, determined, like all other heretics, to undermine both orthodoxy and the Christian Empire. After the sack of Constantinople, and after attempts to force Greek clerics to declare their allegiance to Rome — and only then — the Latins become the most important and most hated enemy. By overlooking this watershed, even some of the best modern scholars have erred about Byzantine attitudes toward the Latins before 1204. V. Laurent thought that the belief, often expressed in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, that Turkish rule was better than Latin rule, "held true for all epochs" of Byzantine history. He further noted that, "If Byzantium had had a taste for wars of religion, it would have directed them toward the West, and not toward the East" [75]. From 1204 on, this may have been true. Before then, it was not.

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(75) LAURENT, *L'idée de guerre sainte*, pp. 83-84.

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## Defenders of the Christian People:
### Holy War in Byzantium

### George T. Dennis

For most civilized people the term *holy war* is a contradiction in terms. What religious motive could possibly transform the widespread destruction and the slaughter of thousands of human beings into a holy and meritorious act? But, as we know, religion has all too often served as a pretext for violence. Before going any further, however, we should agree upon a definition of holy war. Three criteria, I think, are essential. A holy war has to be declared by a competent religious authority, the obvious examples being a Christian pope or a Muslim caliph. The objective must be religious; again, two obvious examples are the protection or recovery of sacred shrines or the forced conversion or subjection of others to your religion. There could, of course, be other goals. Finally, those who participate in the holy war are to be promised a spiritual reward, such as remission of their sins or assurance of a place in paradise.[1]

In the world around the Mediterranean, two forms of holy war did emerge. First, the Muslim *jihād*. Much has been written about this, and I wish only to point out its salient features.[2] *Jihād* is a religious duty for the Muslim community to propagate Islam, employing coercion of various sorts as needed, until the whole world professes Islam or is subject to its laws. At times, especially when the caliph, or other religious authority, proclaims it, this obligation takes the form of armed conflict. Those who die in the struggle are acclaimed as martyrs and are believed to go straight to paradise. The doctrine of *jihād* may be traced to the earliest days of Islam, although maybe not directly to Muhammad himself. The *jihād* did not become one of the five "pillars" of Islam, but it was kept alive by preaching and the attractiveness of the ideal of martyrdom and paradise and the more tangible rewards of booty and plunder. In essence, it was aggressive and bent on conquest. Of course, not every war waged by Muslim powers, including those against

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[1] See M. Canard, "La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et dans le monde chrétien," *RAfr* 79 (1936): 605–23, repr. in *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient* (London, 1973), no. VIII; V. Laurent, "L'idée de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine," *RHSEE* 23 (1946): 71–98; N. Oikonomides, "The Concept of 'Holy War' and Two Tenth-Century Byzantine Ivories," in *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.,* ed. T. Miller and J. Nesbitt (Washington, D.C., 1995), 62–86; T. P. Murphy, ed., *The Holy War* (Columbus, Ohio, 1976).

[2] See Canard, "Guerre sainte"; E. Tyan, "Djihād," *EI²* (Leiden, 1961), 2:551b–553a; J. Kelsay and J. T. Johnson, *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (New York, 1991).

nonbelievers, was a holy war. Many were simply tribal, ethnic, or even national conflicts whose roots often went back to pre-Islamic times.

In Western Europe the idea of a holy war developed later and for different reasons. So much has been written about this that there is no need to enter into detail.[3] First, we must remember that what we call a crusade was, especially during the first century or so, a pilgrimage, and those who took part in it were pilgrims; it was a holy journey *(iter, passagium)*, not a holy war. It was regarded primarily as defensive, that is, armed escorts were to protect pilgrims on their way to the sacred shrines of Christendom and were to recover or defend the holy sites in Palestine. This defensive character differentiated it from *jihād,* as did the fact that it did not advocate the forceful imposition of Christianity upon others. In subsequent centuries, admittedly, and for some participants it did take on a more belligerent character. One need only recall the so-called Albigensian crusades or the one that sacked Constantinople in 1204. Still, the notion of using force to convert the infidel was, with few exceptions, foreign to Christianity, East and West. But the Crusades were proclaimed by the highest religious authority in the West, the pope; they were directed toward a religious end, the protection of fellow Christians in the East and the recovery and defense of the holy places; and those who took part were promised religious rewards, particularly the remission of sin.

For the Byzantines, it must be said at the outset, both ideas and forms of holy war— *jihād* and crusade—were abhorrent.[4] They absolutely rejected both. First, the *jihād.* They did not understand it. What motivated the armies of Islam, as the Byzantines saw it, was the hope of booty and a barbaric love of fighting. According to Leo VI, "The Saracens do not campaign out of a sense of military service and discipline, but rather out of a love of gain and license or, more exactly, in order to plunder on behalf of their faith."[5] Leo dismisses them as "barbarians and infidels" concerned only with plunder.[6] Immense multitudes of them come from Syria and Palestine, "oblivious to the dangers of war, intent only on looting."[7] Byzantine authors, from the seventh to the fourteenth century,

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[3] See J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London. 1993), and, in general, S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades,* 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951–54); K. M. Setton. *A History of the Crusades,* 2d ed., 6 vols. (Madison, Wisc., 1969–89); A. S. Atiya, *The Crusade: Historiography and Bibliography* (Bloomington, 1962); H. E. Mayer, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Hannover, 1960); this comprises 5,362 titles, and the number of works on the Crusades has surely doubled since then. For continuing study of the Crusades, consult the annual *Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East: Bulletin* (1981–97).

[4] Canard, "Guerre sainte"; Laurent, "L'idée de guerre sainte"; A. Laiou, "On Just War in Byzantium," in *To Hellenikon: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr.,* ed. S. Reinert et al. (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1993), 1:156–77; G. Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique au Xe siècle à propos des 'Constitutions tactiques' de l'empereur Léon VI," *CRAI* (Paris, 1983): 219–43.

Byzantine rhetoric about holy war, though, has led some modern scholars to refer to the luckless campaign of Manuel I against the Turks in 1176 as a sort of crusade: R.-J. Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096–1204,* trans. J. C. Morris and J. E. Ridings (Oxford, 1993), 211–14; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 95–98.

[5] *Leonis VI Tacticae constitutiones* 18.24, PG 107:952 (hereafter *Taktika*). Book 18 is also edited by R. Vári, "Bölcs Leo Hadi Taktikájanak XVIII Fejezete," in G. Pauler and S. Szilágyi, *A Magyar Honfoglalás Kútfoi* (Budapest, 1900), 11–89.

[6] *Taktika* 18.128; PG 107:976.

[7] *Taktika* 18.132; PG 107:977.

repeat these accusations, as they profess their utter repugnance for the doctrine of *jihād*. In their polemics against Islam they vehemently criticize the *jihād* as little more than a license for unjustified murder and a pretext for pillaging.[8] And, while the Byzantines, when the opportunity arose, may have indulged in their share of massacre and looting, they did not excuse it in the name of religion.

As far as the Crusades are concerned, it suffices to listen to Anna Komnene, who abhorred both the movement and many of its participants.[9] Still, some Byzantines welcomed the Westerners at first. They were, after all, fellow Christians, although perhaps somewhat careless in their teachings and practices. Emperor Alexios treated them in a civil, almost cordial manner, although he was always nervous about what they might do, and he provided them with military assistance through Asia Minor. But, in general, the Byzantines never seemed to understand why all those Western knights and their followers were marching through their land. Restoring Jerusalem to Christian rule was perhaps a laudable objective, but was it worth such an immense effort, fraught with so many perils and uncertainties and carried out with such brutality? Constantinople, after all, was the New Jerusalem, the true holy city. The Byzantines, always practical, were far more interested in possessing Antioch because of its important strategic position than in holding Jerusalem with all its sentimental value. Pilgrimage they understood and warfare they understood, but the conjoining of the two they did not understand. They would have been utterly appalled at the preaching of St Bernard and his call for the extermination of the infidel (*delenda penitus*), as well as his assertion that killing an enemy of Christ was not homicide, but malecide.[10] And what would they have thought of the rule he drew up for the Templars, monks who wielded lethal weapons in battle?[11] The Byzantines soon came to believe that the warriors from the West had nothing less in mind than the conquest of the empire, and the events of 1204 proved they were right. Ultimately, they came to hate the Latins as much or even more than the Muslims. If the Latins ever referred to their eastern expeditions as "holy war," that term, it is clear, would not have been appreciated by the Byzantines.

Now, to the main point. I have already indicated that the Byzantines did not have any concept of a true holy war, although this will be qualified below. Byzantine writers did use the term *holy war* (*hieros polemos*), but only in reference to one of the three "sacred wars" waged over the possession of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi; these occurred in 590, 449, 355–347, all B.C. Most Byzantine references, such as the *Souda* (I.191), allude

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[8] A. T. Khoury, *Polémique byzantine contre l'Islam, VIII–XIII s.* (Leiden, 1972), 243–59; W. Eichner, "Die Nachrichten über den Islam bei den Byzantinern," *Der Islam* 2 (1936): 131–62, 197–244.

[9] Anne Comnène, *Alexiade*, ed. and trans. B. Leib, 3 vols. (Paris, 1937–43), book 10, 5–11: vol. 2:205–36.

[10] *De laude novae militiae*, in *S. Bernardi opera*, vol. 3, ed. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais (Rome, 1963), 204–39, esp. chap. 3, p. 217; *epistola* 457, *opera*, vol. 8 (Rome, 1977), p. 433; et al.

[11] See *De laude*, passim; *Alexiade* 10.8.8; vol. 2:218. Constantine Stilbes strongly criticized the Latin clergy for engaging in combat and killing the enemy, including other Christians, and for teaching that those who died in war went directly to heaven: J. Darrouzès, "Le mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins," *REB* 21 (1963): 50–100, esp. 69–77. In 1250 Emperor John Vatatzes told Frederick II that it was scandalous for priests to carry weapons and fight in battle: F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, 6 vols. (Vienna, 1860–90), 3:72–73, no. 18.

[ 34 ]   *Defenders of the Christian People*

to the second one, apparently following Thucydides (1.112) and Aristophanes (*Aves* 556). The term *holy war* is used, as far as I can determine, by ancient and Byzantine writers only in connection with those wars.

In one sense, however, all Byzantine wars were holy because the emperor was holy, and it was by his authority and sometimes under his leadership that wars were waged. They were declared by the emperor and fought on behalf of the empire. They were imperial wars, fully in the Roman tradition. Their essential character did not change because the legions now entered battle under the sign of the cross. Their prayers for God's blessing and other religious practices did not make their wars specifically holy or religious, as has sometimes been maintained.[12]

From time immemorial, religion has played a role in warfare. One people offers sacrifice to its gods before going into battle and, upon emerging victorious, will topple the statues of the other people's gods and set up its own. Are these religious wars, or are they simply tribal conflicts motivated by revenge, plunder, or the acquisition of land or slaves? The invocation of deities is basically an additional means of assuring victory, of enlisting the aid of powerful allies and shifting the balance in your favor. Consider the Trojan War. Not only were gods and goddesses called upon with prayer and sacrifice, but they participated directly in the fighting. Yet nobody calls the Trojan War a holy war. Consider, too, those conflicts that have often been cited as precedents and inspirational models for Christian holy wars, I mean those waged by the people of Israel, as related in the books of Joshua, Judges, Kings, and elsewhere. Do they really qualify as religious wars? Were they not primarily armed conflicts between seminomadic tribes struggling to acquire land? Their god may grant them victory or deny it, but, in the final analysis, the fundamental motivation and objective of most of those wars were not primarily religious, those of the Maccabees perhaps being an exception. How many wars, then, waged later by Christians and Muslims were truly religious wars, not to mention holy wars? Were they not, to a large extent, tribal or feudal conflicts with a lot of religious trappings?

In trying to categorize a conflict as religious or holy, we might ask: Are they fighting this war primarily for religious reasons? If little or no religious motivation were present, would they still be fighting? The Crusaders provide a good example. Nobody in his right mind, even in the Middle Ages, would leave the comforts of home, pack up all his belongings, and march off for two thousand kilometers, endure incredible hardships, and face the very real threat of death unless he were religiously motivated. While there were some, like Bohemond, who may have had less lofty motives, the majority of the Crusaders gained no strategic, economic, or political advantage, especially during the first hundred years. They marched off to the East for what they regarded as a religious act, if not a duty. For them, this was surely a holy war.

On the other hand, the long campaigns of Herakleios against the Persians, sometimes depicted as a prototypical crusade, abounded in religious elements.[13] The Persians had

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[12] See the detailed study by A. Kolia-Dermitzakes, *Ho Byzantinos "hieros polemos"* (Athens, 1991); also the review by W. Kaegi, *Speculum* 69 (1994): 518–20.

[13] William of Tyre begins his account of the Crusades with the reign of Herakleios: *Willelmi Tyrensis Chronicon*, CC continuatio medievalis 63–63A, ed. R. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), 1.1:105; trans. E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey, *A History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea, by William Archbishop of Tyre*, 2 vols. (New York, 1943), 1:60.

destroyed churches, massacred Christians, and taken away the holy cross from Jerusalem; they must be punished and the cross restored. The patriarch prayed for victory and blessed the troops as they marched out under the standard of the cross. Religion played a major role throughout the conflict. But, even if these religious motivations had not been present or had not been so prominent, Herakleios would almost certainly have still gone to war. His wars were waged as much for strategic advantage and territory as for religion. The wars of Herakleios were but one phase of the geopolitical conflict between the Romans and the Persians that had been going on for six hundred years. These were imperial wars, not holy wars. Although religious rhetoric and ritual were prominent and pervasive, subsequent Byzantine wars, those of Nikephoros Phokas in the tenth century, for example, or those of the Komnenian emperors in the twelfth, were first and foremost imperial wars. That their objectives sometimes coincided with religious ones did not alter that basic characteristic. Finally, it should be noted that the same religious practices were observed by the Byzantine armed forces whether they were facing a non-Christian or a Christian enemy.

War cries, such as "God help the Romans," "The Cross is victorious," do not transform the nature of a particular war. Religious shouts and symbols are used to instill confidence in the individual soldier and to raise the morale of the army. Religious services, especially the eucharistic liturgy, are meant to comfort the soldier and to prepare him to risk his life.[14] Chaplains still conduct religious services for modern armies, but that does not sanctify their conflicts. Athletes often join in prayer before a game, but we do not talk of a holy football game or a holy soccer match. The church certainly prayed for victory, but it rejected the request of Nikephoros Phokas to have fallen soldiers honored as martyrs.[15] The cross was displayed on the standards, or used in place of a standard, to remind the troops of God's protection and that they were fighting for a Christian nation.[16] Through the centuries, the cross, it may be noted, has been depicted on many banners in wars that have been far from holy. The cross displayed on the flags of several modern nations does not tell us anything about the religious sensibilities of its citizens; Great Britain has three crosses on its flag.

The Byzantine attitude toward war can best be understood in the context of the way in which they viewed the world and life in general. This world and the life it bore were fragile and transitory. The only permanent reality was to be found in another world, the kingdom of heaven. The empire on earth was a mere reflection of that in heaven, and

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[14] See G. Dennis, "Religious Services in the Byzantine Army," *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft S.J.,* Studia Anselmiana 110 (Rome, 1993): 107–17.

[15] *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum,* ed. I. Thurn (Berlin, 1973), 274.62–67; see P. Viscuso, "Christian Participation in Warfare: A Byzantine View," in *Peace and War in Byzantium* (as in note 1), 33–40. Some soldiers were honored as martyrs, such as the Forty-two of Amorion, but that was because they chose to die rather than deny their faith. Three liturgical offices (*akolouthiai*) that have come down to us do not provide evidence for a Byzantine holy war; rather, they are prayers that God may look kindly on the faithful soldiers who have died in war, that he may forgive their sins and receive them into Paradise: L. Petit, "Office inédit en l'honneur de Nicéphore Phocas," *BZ* 13 (1904): 398–419; A. Pertusi, "Una acolouthia militare inedita del X secolo," *Aevum* 22 (1948): 145–68; T. Détorakes and J. Mossay, "Un office byzantin inédit pour ceux qui sont morts à la guerre, dans le Cod. Sin. Gr. 734–735," *Le Muséon* 101 (1988): 183–211.

[16] See G. Dennis, "Byzantine Battle Flags," *ByzF* 8 (1982): 51–63.

the emperor was called to imitate the Lord of heaven. Under God, he was to assure the well-being of his subjects and protect them from all dangers, within and without. The church had a different role. Jesus had told his followers that he could call upon legions of angels to save himself from death,[17] but he did not do so, and neither would his church. Unlike its Latin sister, the Byzantine church left the call to arms and the waging of war, even against the most pernicious and destructive heretics and infidels, to the imperial government. But it took the lead in another kind of struggle, one for the souls of the faithful, a struggle not against human enemies but against cosmic powers and superhuman forces of evil.[18] For Byzantine Christians this was a form of warfare that could be called holy, although I have not found explicit use of that term. The concept of the Christian being involved in a war against the forces of evil goes back, of course, to St. Paul, if not before.[19]

While every Christian had to withstand the onslaughts of the devil, the monks were the frontline troops in the war against the legions of Satan. Night and day, according to Gregory of Nazianzos, the monk must fight the spiritual war (*pneumatikos polemos*).[20] Chrysostom tells his audience that the war against demons is difficult and never ending.[21] Spiritual combat is a regular theme in the *vitae* of the saints.[22] Demons in a variety of shapes, from hyenas to dragons, viciously attacked saints Theodore of Edessa, Gregory of Dekapolis, Joseph the Hymnographer, John Psychaites, Isidore, abbess Sarah, and many others.[23] Story after story is told of their incessant struggles against the forces of sin and darkness.

The demons, for their part, took warfare seriously. They appear in full battle array, in phalanxes of cavalry and infantry that wheeled about in formation. They wore iron breastplates and carried bows and arrows and other missiles.[24] They began their advance against St. Ioannikios in proper order, although making a tremendous racket; they drew up in formation, shouted their war cry, and shot a steady stream of arrows at him. All of this he repelled by the sign of the cross. Under their commander (*strategos*) Satan, the demons arrayed themselves in their phalanxes in a proper battle line (*parataxis*), just as the armed forces of the emperor do, and charged against Constantine the Jew.[25] As the military manuals prescribe, they feigned retreat, shouted insults from afar, regrouped,

[17] Matt. 26:53.

[18] Eph. 6:12.

[19] E.g., Rom. 7:23; Eph. 6:16–20; 1 Thess. 5:6–8; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:4.

[20] *Oratio* 2, 91; PG 35:495B.

[21] *In s. Eustathium*, PG 50:599B.

[22] See P. Bourguignon and P. Wenner, "Combat spirituel," *DSp;* T. Špidlík, *Spirituality of the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1986), 233–66.

[23] F. Dvornik, *Vie de s. Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves macédoniens au IXe siècle* (Paris, 1926), 47, 31; cf. *Vita of Joseph the Hymnographer by Theophanes*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Sbornik grečeskikh i latinskikh pamjatnikov kasajuščikhsja Fotija patriarkha*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1901), 41; Žitie ize vo sv. otca našego Feodora arkhiepiskopa Edesskogo, ed. I. Pomjalovskij (St. Petersburg, 1892), 67, 1–31; P. Van den Ven, "Vie de s. Jean le Psichaïte," *Le Muséon* 21, n.s., 3 (1909): 103; (Isidore) *Apophthegmata Patrum*, PG 65:97; (Sarah) ibid., 229.

Research in this area was greatly facilitated by the Dumbarton Oaks Hagiographical Database; for her assistance in its use the author is especially grateful to Dr. Stamatina McGrath.

[24] *AASS*, Nov. 2.1:395c–396a.

[25] *AASS*, Nov. 4:640.

and attacked again. The saint beat them off with a wooden cross made on the spot, but the effort left him exhausted. A monk in Skete heard a battle trumpet sound as the demons prepared to attack him and force him to quit his prayers.[26]

To confront such adversaries, the monk had to be a soldier. Symeon reminds his monks that they have been called to fight against invisible foes. They have enlisted and taken their place in the ranks of Christ's soldiers.[27] The monks did not wait to be attacked; they did not simply hold the fort, but took the war into the devil's territory and fought him on his own turf, in the desert and in other wild, abandoned locations. Many made a point of settling in the desert where the demons lived.[28] Daniel the Stylite learned that demons were hiding in an old church. He immediately went in to fight them "as a brave soldier strips himself for battle against a host of barbarians," holding the invincible weapon of the cross.[29]

What, then, about the visible, tangible wars waged by the Byzantines with armor and weapons made of solid iron and steel, and against other human foes? No Byzantine treatise on the ideology of war, whether a holy or a just war, has come down to us, and it is unlikely that any was ever written. One must glean what one can from the military manuals and the histories. Although there were occasional rhetorical flourishes in admiration of valor and bravery on the field of battle, and although they were dependent on military means for their survival, the Byzantines, in the words of a retired combat engineer in the sixth century, regarded war "as a great evil and the worst of all evils."[30] "We must always prefer peace above all else," wrote Leo VI, "and refrain from war."[31] For them war was not the "politics by other means" of Clausewitz, but was the last resort. The threat of overwhelming force was preferable to the actual use of such force, and in this, it may be noted, they displayed a striking continuity with the ancient Romans. They sought to obtain their objectives by diplomacy, bribery, covert action, paying tribute, or hiring other tribes to do the fighting. Only when all else had failed were they to take up arms. And even then they tried to avoid a frontal assault and concentrated on wearing out the foe by light skirmishing, clever strategy, and adroit maneuvering. They were reluctant to wage war on both moral and practical grounds. Killing, even when deemed justifiable, was evil—one need only recall the famous, if rarely observed, canon of St. Basil which declared that soldiers who had killed in battle were to be refused communion for three years.[32] On the practical side, war was both hazardous and expensive.

All this is consistent with the remarkable centrality of defense in Byzantine strategic theory and practice. One American military scholar wrote of a sixth-century tactician:

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[26] *Pratum spirituale,* PG 87:3017; M. J. Rouet de Journel, *Le Pré spirituel,* SC 12 (Paris, 1946), 152, p. 204.

[27] Syméon le nouveau théologien, *Catéchèses,* ed. B. Krivocheine, SC 96.1 (Paris, 1963), 3, 129–34, p. 290. *Stratiotes Christou* and the Latin *miles Christi* are very commonly used to designate a monk, but they can also be used for professional soldiers: see, e.g., Kolia-Dermitzakes, *Hieros polemos,* 257.

[28] See, e.g., Evagrius, Praktikos, *Traité pratique ou le moine,* ed. A. and C. Guillaumont, SC 171 (Paris, 1971), 505; A.-J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient,* 4 vols. (Paris, 1961–65), 2:101 ff.

[29] H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites* (Brussels, 1923), chap. 15, p. 15.

[30] G. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises,* CFHB 25 (Washington, D.C., 1985), 20–21.

[31] *Taktika* 2, 45; ed. R. Vári, *Leonis imperatoris Taktika,* 2 vols. (Budapest, 1917–22), libri i–xiv, 43 (hereafter Vári); entire work in PG 107:669–1120; Vári, 1:40; PG 107:696.

[32] Saint Basile, *Lettres,* ed. Y. Courtonne, vol. 2 (Paris, 1961), ep. 188, 13, p. 130.

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"He has a distinctly defensive mind, and sees so clearly what the enemy may do to him that he has no time to think of what he may do to the enemy."[33] The Byzantines were not a warlike people and, in fact, this led the Crusaders to accuse them of cowardice. Their entire attitude toward war was colored by their emphasis on defense and, in this respect, certainly differed from the crusade and the *jihād,* both of which were aggressive by nature. Even the offensive campaigns into enemy territory of Herakleios, Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes, and Basil II were aimed at recovering and protecting regions that rightfully belonged to the Roman Empire.

In the Byzantine world, war was not, as sometimes in the West, a lethal playing field on which so-called noblemen displayed their prowess and sought glory. In itself, war was not a good or meritorious act, and it was certainly not "holy." How, then, did they justify war? "The purpose of all wars is peace." So wrote Aristotle long ago, and in the eleventh century Anna Komnene quoted him in explaining why her father Alexios had to devote so much time and energy to warfare.[34] She also makes it clear that, as with an individual, so a nation was entitled to use force in defending itself. Alexios was also, in her mind, justified in taking military action to recover lost territory, to force compliance with a sworn treaty, or to avert a greater evil.[35] Other writers, when they do advert to the causes of war, seek to justify it much as Anna.

Perhaps the clearest and most deliberate explanation of the Byzantine view of war is that put forth by Leo VI in the beginning of his *Tactical Constitutions,* very early in the tenth century. While the emperor's highest priority was to see to the peace and prosperity of his subjects, he realizes that, to assure this, he must maintain the armed forces in good order and promote the study of tactics and strategy. Why must war take up so much of the emperor's energies? "Out of reverence for the image and the word of God, all men ought to have embraced peace and fostered love for one another instead of taking up murderous weapons in their hands to be used against their own people. But since the devil, the original killer of men, the enemy of our race, has made use of sin to bring men around to waging war, contrary to their basic nature, it is absolutely necessary for men to wage war in return against those whom the devil maneuvers and to take their stand with unflinching resolve against nations who want war." Eventually, he hopes, "peace will be observed by all and become a way of life."[36]

The Byzantines were not to wage war against other peoples, Leo wrote, unless those others should initiate hostilities and invade our territory. "Then," he addressed the commander, "you do indeed have a just cause, inasmuch as the enemy has started an unjust war. With confidence and enthusiasm take up arms against them. It is they who have provided the cause and who have unjustly raised their hands against those subject to us. Take courage then. You will have the God of justice on your side. Taking up the struggle on behalf of your brothers, you and your whole force will be victorious. . . . Always make sure that the causes of war are just."[37]

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[33] Dennis, *Three Treatises,* 83 n. 1.

[34] *Alexiade* 12.5.4; vol. 3:68. The reference is to Aristotle, *Politics* 7.13.8.

[35] Cf. Laiou, "Just War," 156–65.

[36] *Taktika,* prooemium, 3; Vári, 1:4; PG 107:673.

[37] *Taktika* 2.46; Vári, 1:40; PG 107:696.

The Byzantine wars were not "holy" wars, but just wars, imperial wars. They were waged to defend the empire or to recover land that rightfully belonged to it. The soldiers put their lives on the line for the emperor and the people subject to him, the Christian people. They were to "struggle on behalf of relatives, friends, fatherland, and the entire Christian people."[38] Toward the end of the tenth century another military author spoke up on behalf of the men on the eastern frontier who "choose to brave dangers on behalf of our holy emperors and all the Christian people. They are the defenders and, after God, the saviors of the Christians."[39]

In conclusion, then, Muslims believed force might be used to bring all people under the sway of Islam; Western knights believed that they were called not only to defend but to "exalt" Christianity and that attacks on its enemies could be holy and meritorious. The Byzantines believed that war was neither good nor holy, but was evil and could be justified only in certain conditions that centered on the defense of the empire and its faith. They were convinced that they were defending Christianity itself and the Christian people, as indeed they were.

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[38] *Taktika* 18.19; Vári, 1:21; PG 107:949. Late in the 12th century, archbishop Euthymios Malakes of Patras, in a court oration, has the soldiers of Manuel I echo these same sentiments: "We labor on behalf of religion and campaign on behalf of God; we do no injustice to foreigners but do battle for what belongs to us." He has the emperor take the lead in the struggle and profess his readiness to die on behalf of the Christian people. *Euthymiou Malake ta sozomena,* ed. K. G. Mpones, 2 vols. (Athens, 1937–49), 2:31.5–8; 52.10–13.

[39] Dennis, *Three Treatises,* chap. 19, pp. 216–17.

# Part II
# Financing Warfare, Recruitment

# [5]

# Military Service, Military Lands, and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations

## JOHN HALDON

### I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the military, as the coercive arm of an organized state, and "civil society" is always interesting and important, because it is never an easy one. There are always tensions between the army in its purely military role (however that may be defined in each specific culture), and the army as a nexus of social opinions and people of different regional or local loyalties and traditions.

How we approach the subject depends on what structural significance we attach to the army in the state and society: which elements of the army played what roles in politics, for example, and where in the pattern of social power relationships are they to be situated at different times? What sort of state are we talking about? And how did the state organize such things as the recruitment and payment, the equipping and supplying of its soldiers? And how do we define the term "soldier" in a society in which there were quite clearly both technical and everyday usages, reflected in the employment of the word *stratiotes* to mean different things in different contexts?

Tied in to these questions are issues of normative roles and behavior. How did people in the society regard soldiers of differing status and function? How did they respond to them under different conditions—especially those which counted as "abnormal"? What legal status did soldiers of all types have in respect of their position in regard to the state and civil society at large?

Finally, how did the political ideology of the state fit soldiers into its scheme of things? And how did soldiers use this ideological system at different times, to whose advantage did they act, and with what intention? What was the self-perception of soldiers, and how differentiated was it—was there a difference, for example, between the

[1] In spite of the considerable literature treating the military structures of the later empire, studies dealing specifically with the issues mentioned here have only relatively recently begun to appear. The classic work is R. MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). W. E. Kaegi, Jr., *Byzantine Military Unrest 471–843: An Interpretation* (Amsterdam, 1981), provides a survey of the role of

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views of officers and those of "men," between fighters and logistics staff, or across time, as the social origins of soldiers changed?[1]

I cannot examine all these themes here. But by looking at a particular area, namely that of the social status and recruitment of soldiers and their leaders in the context of the strategic organization of the armies and its evolution, I shall touch upon several of them and suggest some approaches which may be useful for further research. For in spite of differences in emphasis over the years, certain key problems continue to dominate the study of the Byzantine army, especially where its institutional and social history is concerned. This is particularly evident in two major themes, namely, the origins, development, and decline of the middle Byzantine system of military districts, or *themata,* and of the system of "military lands." And it is worth noting that this represents no mere concern for administrative and institutional history alone. On the contrary, it was evident from the very beginnings of the debate that these institutions played a crucial role in the social and political history of the Byzantine world.

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armies in state and provincial politics, but no analysis of the social and economic contexts within which this should be understood. He does provide some references to the modern sociology of the military, however, illustrative of the sort of work which might be done on similar Byzantine institutions (and see my review, in *BSl* 44 [1983], 54–57); A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey,* 3 vols. and maps (Oxford, 1964), 607–80, provides the best modern survey of many of these aspects for the period up to the year 602. It can be supplemented by a range of more recent publications, esp. the collection *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique* (= Colloques nationaux du CNRS, no. 936) (Paris, 1977), particularly the contributions of R. Rebuffat, J.-M. Carrié, M. Christol, D. Van Berchem, A. Chastagnol, and E. Patlagean; the chapter of F. Winkelmann, "Zum byzantinischen Staat (Kaiser, Aristokratie, Heer)," in F. Winkelmann, H. Köpstein, H. Ditten, and I. Rochow, *Byzanz im 7. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Herausbildung des Feudalismus* (= BBA 48) (Berlin, 1978), 161–288; T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy, A.D. 554–800* (Rome, 1984); J.-M. Carrié, "L'esercito: Trasformazioni funzionali ed economie locali," in *Società romana e impero tardoantico: Istituzioni, Ceti, Economie,* ed. A. Giardina (Rome, 1986), 449–88, 760–71; idem, "Patronage et propriété militaire au IVe siècle: Objet rhétorique et objet réel du Discours 'Sur les Patronages' de Libanius," *BCH* 100 (1976), 159–76; G. Ravegnani, *Soldati di Bisanzio in età Giustinianea* (= Materiali e Ricerche, nuova Serie 6) (Rome, 1988); the relevant sections of S. Mazzarino, *Aspetti sociali del quarto secolo* (Rome, 1951); R. Rémondon, "Militaires et civils dans une campagne égyptienne au temps de Constance II," *JSav* (1965), 132–43; as well as in a number of older works. Of these, the most significant are: F. Aussaresses, *L'Armée byzantine à la fin du 6e siècle d'après le Stratégicon de l'empereur Maurice* (= Bibliothèque des Universités du Midi, fasc. 14) (Paris, 1909); R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin, 1920); J. Maspéro, *Organisation militaire de l'Égypte byzantine* (Paris, 1912); A. Müller, "Das Heer Iustinians nach Prokop und Agathias," *Philologus* 71 (1912), 101–38; E. Stein, "Untersuchungen zur spätbyzantinischen Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," *Mitteilungen zur osmanischen Geschichte* 2 (1923–25), 1–62; J. L. Teall, "The Barbarians in Justinian's Armies," *Speculum* 40 (1965), 294–322; D. Van Berchem, *L'Armée de Dioclétian et la réforme Constantinienne* (Paris, 1952). For a recent attempt to analyze, from a Weberian perspective, the complexities of normative political beliefs in Constantinople during the reign of Justinian, including also the position of the soldiers and officers of the palatine and other units in the capital, esp. with respect to the Nika "riot," see Chr. Gizewski, *Zur Normativität und Struktur der Verfassungsverhältnisse in der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit* (= MünchBeitr 71) (Munich, 1988).

In addition to these a number of works deal primarily with institutional/administrative aspects of Roman and later Roman military organization, some of which also include discussions of the social and ideological position of soldiers. See, for example, Th. Mommsen, "Das römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian," *Hermes* 24 (1889), 195–279; and more recently E. Gabba, *Per la storia dell'esercito romano in età imperiale* (Bologna, 1974); idem, in "Ordinamenti militari del Tardo Impero," in *Ordinamenti militari in Occidente nell'alto medioevo* (= *Settimane* 15, 1967) (Spoleto, 1968), 1, 79ff; D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (= Epigraphische Studien 7) (Düsseldorf–Köln, 1969).

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## II. A Brief Historical Survey

Until the 1940s, scholars had more or less agreed on the nature of the transition from late Roman military structures to those of the Byzantine Empire. There were differences of opinion, of course, but on the whole these were relatively minor. Writers such as Fedor Uspenskij and Julian Kulakovskij in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—along with scholars such as Heinrich Gelzer, John Bagnell Bury, Norman Baynes, Charles Diehl, Charles William Oman, Ernst Stein, and one or two others—had devoted articles and monographs to aspects of the military organization of the empire.[2] All had noted and commented upon the difference between the late Roman system of civil provinces and military regions under separate and distinct administrative structures, and the later Byzantine system of military districts or *themata* under the unified authority of a *strategos* or general. Uspenskij first remarked on the possible relationship between themes and soldiers' lands, and the events of the reign of Heraclius; Gelzer in particular, followed by Stein, who also noted the possibility of a connection between the beginnings of the themes and the lands of soldiers, attempted to trace the process of change from one to another, and other historians—especially Bury—took up this problem.[3] The general consensus was that the origins of the later themes lay in a combination of the militarization of the older Roman provinces and dioceses, on the one hand, stressing in particular the formation of the two exarchates of Ravenna and Carthage in the reign of Tiberius II or Maurice (i.e., between 578 and 602), with the establishment of a more widespread provincialization of recruitment following the pattern of the *limitanei,* the frontier garrison soldiers spread along the *limites* or defended borders of the empire. The majority of scholars regarded the reign of Heraclius as central to these changes.[4]

The discussion then lapsed for some years, and it was only in the late 1940s that the problem of the creation of the *themata* again began to attract interest. This is not to say that further work did not appear in the interim: the Hungarian scholar Eugen Darkó published several articles on what was seen as the process of "militarization" of the

[2] F. I. Uspenskij, "Voennoe ustrojstvo vizantijskoj imperii," *IRAIK* 6 (1900), 154–207; J. Kulakovskij, *Istorija Vizantii,* III: *602–717* (Kiev, 1915; London, 1973), 387ff; idem, "K voprosu ob imeni i istorii Themy 'Opsikii'," *VizVrem* 11 (1904), 49–62, and the reviews by K. Krumbacher, "Zur Frage über die Themen des byzantinischen Reiches," *BZ* 13 (1904), 641f, and L. Bréhier, "La transformation de l'empire byzantin sous les Héraclides," *JSav* (1917), 401–15, 445–53, 498–506; H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (= *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen klasse der königl. sächsichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften,* vol. 18, no. 5) (Leipzig, 1899; repr. Amsterdam, 1966); E. W. Brooks, "Arabic Lists of Byzantine Themes," *JHS* 21 (1901), 167–77; J. B. Bury, "The *aplekta* of Asia Minor," *Byzantis* 2 (1911–12), 216–24; J. B. Bury, "The Naval Policy of the Roman Empire in Relation to the Western Provinces from the Seventh to the Ninth Century," in *Centenario della Nascita di Michele Amari* II (Palermo, 1910), 21–34; J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century, with a revised text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (= British Academy Supplemental Papers I) (London, 1911); Ch. Diehl, *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Exarchat de Ravenne* (= BEFAR 53) (Paris, 1888); Ch. Diehl, "L'origine du régime des Thèmes dans l'empire byzantin," in his *Études Byzantines* (Paris, 1905), 276–92; C. W. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages* (London, 1924); E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II und Tiberius Konstantinus* (Stuttgart, 1919), esp. 117–40 ("Zur Entstehung der Themenverfassung").

[3] See Gelzer, *Themenverfassung;* Stein, *Studien;* Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System.*

[4] See in particular Diehl, "L'Origine du régime des thèmes."

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Byzantine Empire and the influence of military structures from the Eurasian steppe zone, while the Greek scholar Nikostratos Kalomenopoulos published a book in 1937 on the organization of the Byzantine army. The latter, unfortunately, has no bibliography and virtually no secondary references, so that it is difficult to say what aspects of the debate the author was familiar with; but Kalomenopoulos did take up a further element of the problem, one which had been raised first by Uspenskij, then by Gelzer and by Diehl, namely that of the nature of recruitment of the soldiers and the connection between that and the themes themselves.[5] Similarly, in discussing aspects of the imperial fiscal and civil administration, a number of scholars had to deal with some of the questions raised in connection with military organization.[6]

The beginnings of the modern debate, if we can call it that, can be traced to the work of Agostino Pertusi and Georg Ostrogorsky. In an article in 1953, Ostrogorsky set out to disprove the thesis that had been recently proposed by Pertusi that the *themata* were a development of the second half of the seventh century only, and to prove on the contrary that there had existed a direct connection between the creation of the themes, the politics of Emperor Heraclius during and immediately after the Persian war, and the ways in which soldiers in the themes were recruited. It was Ostrogorsky who first constructed a clear set of hypotheses about the nature of the military lands, whose creation he attributed to Heraclius, and the establishment of new, militarized provinces, created to cater for the recruiting and supplying of the field armies of the period of the Persian and, more especially, the first Arab wars, field armies which Diehl had already seen bore the Hellenized names of their late Roman predecessors, the forces of the *magistri militum*.[7]

Ostrogorsky's thesis on the "theme system," which it now became, was supported, tacitly or more vocally, by several scholars, among them both Franz Dölger and Wilhelm Enßlin.[8] But it was soon challenged by Pertusi, elaborating on his original position, as well as by Johannes Karayannopoulos.[9] The latter argued for a more gradual evolution

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[5] E. Darkó, "La militarizzazione dell'impero bizantino," *SBN* 5 (1939), 88–99; idem, "Influences touraniennes sur l'évolution de l'art militaire des Grecs, des Romains et des Byzantins," *Byzantion* 10 (1935), 443–69; N. Kalomenopoulos, *He stratiotike organosis tes hellenikes autokratorias tou Byzantiou* (Athens, 1937), see 20ff.

[6] See in particular F. Dölger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung besonders des 10. and 11. Jahrhunderts* (= *ByzArch* 9) (Munich, 1927; Hildesheim, 1960); G. Ostrogorsky, "Die ländliche Steuergemeinde des byzantinischen Reiches im X. Jahrhundert," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 20 (1927), 1–108; G. Ostrogorsky, "Das Steuersystem im byzantinischen Altertum und Mittelalter," *Byzantion* 6 (1931), 229–40.

[7] See Diehl, "L'Origine du régime des thèmes," 290f; and A. Pertusi, "Nuova ipotesi sull'origine dei 'temi bizantini'," *Aevum* 28 (1954), 126–50; idem, ed. and comm., *Costantino Porfirogenito, De Thematibus* (= ST 160) (Città del Vaticano, 1952), commentary, 120ff; G. Ostrogorsky, "Sur la date de la composition du Livre des Thèmes et sur l'époque de la constitution des premiers Thèmes d'Asie Mineure," *Byzantion* 23 (1953), 31–66.

[8] F. Dölger, "Zur Ableitung des byzantinischen Verwaltungsterminus *thema*," *Historia* 4 (1955), 189–98, repr. in F. Dölger, *Paraspora: 30 Aufsätze zur Geschichte, Kultur und Sprache des byzantinischen Reiches* (Ettal, 1961), 231–46; W. Enßlin, "Der Kaiser Herakleios und die Themenverfassung," *BZ* 46 (1953), 362–68; also idem, "Zur Verwaltung Siziliens vom Ende des weströmischen Reiches bis zum Beginn der Themenverfassung," *SBN* 7 (1953), 355–64. See also the comment of N. H. Baynes, "The Emperor Heraclius and the Military Theme System," *EHR* 67 (1952), 380–81.

[9] A. Pertusi, "La formation des thèmes byzantins," in *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, I (Munich, 1958), 1–40; J. Karayannopoulos, "Contribution au problème des Thèmes byzantins," *Hellénisme*

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of the themes out of the old late Roman field armies and the *limitanei,* suggesting in effect that the situation as it is known from the sixth century developed through a "natural progression" to that known from the tenth century. Pertusi's views, which provide the third possibility, and which seem to me the most plausible, argue for a gradual transformation of the late Roman establishment under the pressures imposed by the radically changed military, political, and economic situation which pertained from the earlier and middle seventh century and after.

The result from the late 1950s—summed up nicely in the papers presented by these scholars at the 1958 International Byzantine Congress in Munich and those published in the years immediately after[10]—was the establishment of two clearly divided schools of thought: one based its arguments around the idea of Heraclius having deliberately introduced a series of "reforms" in a conscious effort to counter future threats from the Persians; the other, in one of the two variant forms referred to above, presented what has been called a gradualist approach, seeing the themes as arising slowly out of either the administrative structures of the sixth century or out of the chaos of the seventh century, and questioning the connection of the latter with the system of recruitment, however it worked, postulated by the Ostrogorsky thesis, a system centered on the notion of the "military lands." The most extreme version of the opposition to the Ostrogorsky approach was voiced by Paul Lemerle in two articles published in 1958, the same year as the Munich Congress, in which he argued that there was no clear connection in the sources between military lands, so called, and the themes.[11] Hélène Ahrweiler similarly published a major survey of the military and civil administrative apparatus of the state from the ninth to the eleventh century in which, while avoiding the issue of the origins of the themes and military lands, she tended implicitly toward Lemerle's position. Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou, analyzing the origins of the naval *thema* of the *Karabisianoi,* although with different conclusions, tended in contrast to follow the position promoted by Ostrogorsky.[12]

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*Contemporain* 10 (1956), 455–502; idem, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (= *ByzArch* 10) (Munich, 1959); idem, "Die vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit des Kaisers Herakleios," *JÖBG* 10 (1961), 53–57.

[10] See, for example, G. Ostrogorsky, "Korreferat zu Pertusi, La formation des Thèmes byzantins," in *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress,* I (Munich, 1958), 1–8; idem, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates,* 3rd ed. (= *HAW* 12, 1.2: Byzantinisches Handbuch 1, 2) (Munich, 1963), 80ff; idem, "L' Exarchat de Ravenne et l'origine des Thèmes byzantins," *CorsiRav* 1 (1960), 99–110; see also the critical review of the work of Pertusi and Karayannopoulos by Ostrogorsky, in *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 47 (1960), 261ff; H.-W. Haussig, "Die Anfänge der Themenordnung," in *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike,* ed. F. Altheim and R. Stiel (Frankfurt a.M., 1957), 82–114.

[11] P. Lemerle, "Esquisse pour un histoire agraire de Byzance," *RH* 219 (1958), 32–74, 254–84; *RH* 220 (1958), 42–94; now revised and published as *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century: The Sources and the Problems* (Galway, 1979); see the review by A. P. Kazhdan, in *VizVrem* 16 (1959), 92ff, which prefers the "traditional" view represented by Ostrogorsky. It is worth noting, however, that even Gelzer thought that the "theme system" developed only very slowly, reaching maturity toward the end of the eighth century, a view based on the continued existence, and use, of the older, late Roman, civil provincial names, and on certain facets of the imperial administration as revealed through the sigillographic material then available and occasional references in the literary sources. As I have suggested elsewhere, he was not mistaken in this appreciation of the situation. See below.

[12] H. Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IXe–XIe siècles," *BCH* 84 (1960), 1–109; views repeated in eadem, *Byzance et la mer: La marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions*

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Apart from one or two significant contributions dealing with specific problems from scholars such as Nicolas Oikonomides and Walter Kaegi in the period from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s—the former tending to favor the Heraclian reform, the latter clearly coming out against it—the situation remained more or less polarized around these positions for the next fifteen years or so.[13]

As always seems to happen with such debates, what can in fact be taken as a compromise solution then developed, but one which was clearly along the lines of that enunciated in the work of Pertusi and, to a lesser extent, Karayannopoulos. On the one hand, certain developments, crucial to the evolution of the later "thematic" system, did have their roots in the reign of Heraclius, even before his reign (a point stressed by Stein). On the other hand, the idea that there had been any direct institutional connection between the *limitanei* and the thematic system was challenged or dismissed, while it was also argued that there is no evidence for the creation of a system of recruitment based from its beginnings on the attribution by the state of lands to soldiers and their families at all.[14]

In the last few years, a number of historians have expressed their support for this position; others have accepted it, with minor and major modifications; still others have rejected it, and sought to restore the Ostrogorsky thesis to its former preeminence. Of the first two groups, Ahrweiler, André Guillou, Kaegi, Gilbert Dagron, Danŭta Górecki, and Oikonomides are probably the names which have appeared most frequently in print. But there are several others. Of the last group, Warren Treadgold and Martha Gregoriou-Ioannidou have provided the most important counterarguments, although very different from one another, with Michael Hendy providing a middle-road alternative: Gregoriou-Ioannidou has tried to revive a Karayannopoulos view, bringing the

*maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siècles* (Paris, 1966), 19ff; H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, "A propos de la première mention d'un stratège des Caravisiens," *BSl* 27 (1966), 71–91; eadem, *Études d'histoire maritime à Byzance, à propos du Thème des Caravisiens* (Bibliothèque Générale de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, VIe section) (Paris, 1966), 47–61, 99ff, with a useful survey of views expressed up to that time.

[13] N. Oikonomides, "A Chronological Note on the First Persian Campaign of Heraclius (622)," *BMGS* 1 (1975), 1–9, see the comment at 8–9; idem, "Les premiers mentions des thèmes dans la chronique de Théophane," *ZRVI* 16 (1976), 1–8; idem, "Une liste arabe des stratèges byzantins du VIIe siècle et les origines du Thème de Sicile," *RSBN* 11 (1964), 121–30; also in favor of a Heraclian origin is J. L. Teall, "The Byzantine Agricultural Tradition," *DOP* 25 (1971), 34–59, see 47f; P. Charanis, "Some Remarks on the Changes in Byzantium in the Seventh Century," in *Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky* I (= *ZRVI* 8. 1) (Belgrade, 1963), 71–76. Skeptical with regard to a Heraclian creation, W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Some Reconsiderations on the Themes: Seventh-Ninth Centuries," *JÖBG* 16 (1967), 39–53; idem, "Some Perspectives on the Middle Byzantine Period," *Balkan Studies* 10 (1969), 293–98; idem, *Byzantine Military Unrest* (cited note 1 above), esp. 174–79.

[14] See R.-J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (= MiscByzMonac 22) (Munich, 1976), esp. 287–321; idem, "'Thrakien' und 'Thrakesion': Zur byzantinischen Provinzorganisation am Ende des 7. Jahrhunderts," *JÖB* 26 (1977), 7–47; and most recently, idem, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform: Zu den Anfängen der Themenorganisation im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert," *BSl* 45 (1984), 27–39, 190–201; E. Patlagean, "L'impôt payé par les soldats," in *Armées et fiscalité* (cited note 1 above), 303–9; J. F. Haldon, "Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c.550–950: A Study on the Origins of the stratiotika ktemata," SBWien 357 (Vienna, 1979); idem, "Some Remarks on the Background to the Iconoclast Controversy," *BSl* 38 (1977), 161–84; idem, with H. Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands," *ZRVI* 19 (1980), 79–116; idem, *Byzantine Praetorians: An Administrative, Institutional, and Social Survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata, c.580–900* (= Poikila Byzantina 3) (Bonn, 1984), esp. 164–74.

*limitanei* back into the picture, whereas Treadgold has tried to build a thesis more purely representing the position of Ostrogorsky, basing his arguments primarily on the traditional significance ascribed to the reign of Heraclius, together with some new suggestions, in particular regarding the fate of the imperial estates between the seventh and tenth century. Hendy has favored a version of this last view, with some important suggestions on the role of the fiscal administration and the *kommerkiarioi;* and Oikonomides has also suggested his own middle way, supporting tentatively the idea of an original Heraclian origin, but in the context of a gradual evolution tied in to the changing fiscal structures of the state as well as its military administration.[15]

In what follows, I should like to make this brief summary of often quite complex debates more meaningful by outlining key issues of the current state of the debate. I will try to give a balanced overview.

## III. The Debate on the So-called Theme System

There are two aspects to the problems we have discussed: the origins of the so-called theme system itself; and the ways in which soldiers were recruited, and the connection that has been postulated by some historians between these and the *themata* themselves. With the exception of one or two specific problems, the former is probably the most easily summarized and involves the least number of technical textual problems, and so I will deal with this first. I will then examine the systems of recruitment, which remain still the focus of considerable disagreement, and last I will examine the implications of all this for the social position and status of soldiers and "the military" in general in the Byzantine world at different times.

It is generally agreed that the word *thema* meant originally simply army, applied to the forces of the commanders-in-chief (or *magistri militum*) of the late Roman field armies (those of Oriens, Armenia, the praesental field forces or Obsequium, and Thrace, together with the rump of the Justinianic Quaestura exercitus, which formed a naval

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[15] See, for example, A. Guillou, *Régionalisme et indépendence dans l'empire byzantin au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle: L'exemple de l'Exarchat et de la Pentapole d'Italie* (Rome, 1969); idem, "Transformation des structures socio-économiques dans le monde byzantin du VIe au VIIIe siècle," *ZRVI* 19 (1980), 71–78; W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Changes in Military Organization and Daily Life on the Eastern Frontier," in *He Kathemerine Zoe sto Byzantio. Tomes kai Synexeies sten hellenistike kai romaike paradose. Praktika* (Athens, 1989), 507–21; idem, "Notes on Hagiographic Sources for Some Institutional Changes and Continuities in the Early Seventh Century," *Byzantina* 7 (1975), 58–70; idem, "Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions," *ByzF* 8 (1982), 87–113; idem, "Heraklios and the Arabs," *GOTR* 27 (1982), 109–33; idem, "Late Roman Continuity in the Financing of Heraclius' Army," in *Akten des XVI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses,* 2. 2 (JÖB 32.2) (Vienna, 1982), 53–61; G. Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique au X<sup>e</sup> siècle: À propos des constitutions tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI," *CRAI* (1983), 219–42; D. Górecki, "The Strateia of Constantine VII: The Legal Status, Administration and Historical Background," *BZ* 82 (1989), 157–76. For the critics of this position, see W. T. Treadgold, "The Military Lands and the Imperial Estates in the Middle Byzantine Empire," in *Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (= *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7) (Cambridge, Mass., 1983) 619–31; and M. Gregoriou-Ioannidou, "Plerophoreies hagiologikon keimenon gyro apo stratiotika zetemata," in *He Kathemerine Zoe sto Byzantio* (cited above), 531–45; and esp. eadem, *Stratologia kai eggeia stratiotike idioktesia sto Byzantio* (= Hetaireia Byzantinon Spoudon 4) (Thessaloniki, 1989). For the arguments of Hendy and Oikonomides, see M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), 619ff, and N. Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits: Salary and Armament," in *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75,* ed. J. Duffy and J. Peradotto (Buffalo, N.Y., 1988), 121–36.

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division referred to until the later seventh century as the *Karabisianoi,* or ship troops).[16] Its origins are disputed, but the most likely root is from the verb *tithemi,* to set down or, by derivation and extension, establish, an argument put forward by Dölger in 1955, and referring to the fact that the armies in question were withdrawn into Asia Minor shortly after 636–637, in which year Roman attempts to reestablish their position in Syria and Palestine were finally shattered at the battle of the Yarmuk.[17] The Greek versions of these Latin divisional names became standard and are those which can be recognized as the Anatolikon, Armeniakon, Opsikion, Thrakesion, and Karabisianoi, as mentioned. The actual process of withdrawal, which appears to have followed the defeat at the Yarmuk in 636, probably took place from about 637 to 640. There is evidence that the process was rather carefully organized in regard to the logistical demands of the divisions, which were thus withdrawn in relation to the potential and extent of the districts which they came to occupy to support them adequately. This last point will be relevant when we consider the ways in which the state came to maintain its forces in the second half of the seventh century and afterward.

But it seems that already by the 670s and perhaps earlier an identity had developed between the names of the armies so withdrawn by Heraclius and the districts occupied by the said armies, so that the group of provinces occupied by a given army came to be referred to by the name of that army. Thus the names of the armies were applied to the districts over which they were spread, and a new set of territorial descriptive terms enters the medieval Greek language. But it is very important to say that, as far as I can tell, this hardly affected the administration of those regions. The older civil *eparchiai* or provinces continue to exist well into the eighth century and, as I have argued at greater length elsewhere, some significant aspects of the late Roman civil administrative appa-

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[16]See Diehl, "L'Origine du régime des thèmes." The *Karabisianoi* appear to be first mentioned in the *iussio* or letter sent to the pope by Justinian II in 687 ratifying the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (held at Constantinople in 680), and are referred to as the *Cabarisiani.* Gelzer (*Georgii Cyprii Descriptio orbis Romani* [Leipzig, 1890], xliii) emended this to *Calarisiani,* hence referring to the forces based at Sardinia and, following the order of the text itself, those based in Africa, but changed his views (following Diehl's arguments) in *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung,* 11, 20ff. Antoniadis-Bibicou took up this suggestion, however, since a later Arab geographer, using earlier sources, also includes a reference to the *patricius* of Sardinia as one of the chief officers of the empire—see N. Oikonomides, "Une liste arabe des stratèges byzantins du VIIe siècle et les origines du Thème de Sicile," *RSBN* 11 (1964), 121–30, and Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Histoire maritime,* 65f. While this view has been supported by A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World* (London, 1973), 227–28 and note 6, as well as by Guillou, *Régionalisme et indépendance,* 159, note 67, it has been challenged by Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer,* 22ff; see also P. Charanis, "On the Origins of the Theme of the Carabisiani," in *Silloge Bizantina in Onore di S. G. Mercati* (Rome, 1957), 72–75; Pertusi, "La formation des thèmes byzantins," 39 and note 178. Diehl suggested that the *Carabisiani* represented a successor to the older *Quaestura exercitus* established by Justinian I, a suggestion dismissed, however, by Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer,* 12, note 2. In fact, as Hendy has shown—to my mind, conclusively—Diehl's hypothesis was correct. See Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy,* 651ff.

[17]See Dölger, "Zur Ableitung"; and more recently, J.-D. Howard-Johnston, "Thema," in *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine, and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning,* ed. A. Moffatt (= Byzantina Australiensia 5) (Canberra, 1984), 189–97. The latter argues that the term may be derived from an altaic word, referring to divisions of 10,000 men, and that it was introduced to the Roman army during the reign of Heraclius, probably by Chazar allies. While ingenious, the argument has not met with general acceptance, the more so since the Greek word, while there is no direct evidence of its evolution or its earlier application in the sense suggested by Dölger, nevertheless provides a plausible explanation.

ratus survived until the early ninth century, when it was replaced, whether in stages or a single act, by the emperors of the period up to and including the 840s.[18]

The point is that the traditional view of the *themata* as military districts headed by a generalissimo with supreme authority, both civil and military, is strictly true only for the second half of the ninth and some of the tenth century. Until the abolition or phasing out of the older civil structures between roughly the 780s and 830s, the *strategos* was the head of the *thema*, but in a qualified way, for he was concerned chiefly with the most effective way of supporting and reproducing the provincial armies.

Even after the changes which had occurred by the 840s, evidenced partly in the so-called *Taktikon Uspenskij*, thematic generals remained to a degree independent only as far as purely military matters went. And this is, I think, the nub of the matter: their exalted position in the sources which reflect the situation of the seventh and eighth

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[18]For the extent and composition of the first themes, see now Hendy, *Studies*, esp. 621ff; and J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 215ff. Older literature, and survey of the material, in R.-J. Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform: Zu den Anfängen der Themenorganisation im 7. and 8. Jahrhundert," *BSl* 45 (1984), 27–39, 190–201, see 32ff.

For the survival of the older civil administrative infrastructure, a point first emphasized by Gelzer, *Themenverfassung*, but stressed also by Pertusi, Karayannopoulos, Kaegi, and Lilie, see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 173–207, esp. 194ff. The process of transformation leading to the "new," medieval system of provincial civil and fiscal administration is difficult to reconstruct. It was certainly slow and represented a series of quite complex, piecemeal responses to specific situations faced by the central government. It has been generally accepted that still in the early ninth century the thematic administration was conducted by civil governors, presumably subordinate to the *strategoi* (although there is no evidence until much later that this was actually the case), officials who combined the role of both the older ad hoc praetorian prefects appointed to cater for the demands of the army (see W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions," *ByzF* 8 [1982], 87–113, see 106f), and civil governors of proconsular (*anthypatos*) status. At some point in the first half of the 9th century, however, they appear to have been replaced in their administrative functions by officials who, according to later sources, were under central supervision (from the imperial *sakellion*) called *protonotarioi*, officials of relatively humble status; and at some time after the compilation of the list of precedence known as the *Taktikon Uspenskij*, in 842/3, the posts themselves appear to have been abolished, the title *anthypatos* (proconsul) continuing in use as a purely titular (if also high-ranking) term (see E. Stein, "Ein Kapitel vom persischen und vom byzantinischen Staate," *BNJ* 1 [1920], 50–89, who first discussed this issue in detail, followed by Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, 205f; Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 201–6, with 201–2 note 10 on Stein's and Kaegi's interpretations). I have argued that the fact that, from about the same time, thematic *strategoi* begin to be ranked as *anthypatoi* (although the regular use of the term as a de facto recognition of the powers of *strategoi* may pre-date its "official" recognition in the formal system of precedence), is good evidence that the latter were from this time also endowed formally with civil administrative authority, leaving the fiscal supervision of their *themata* to the now much more important *protonotarioi*. For the seals of *protonotarioi* and the literary sources which illustrate their increased prominence in the first half of the 9th century, see esp. F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (= BBA 53) (Berlin, 1985), 118–37, esp. 129 (with note 2), 130–31, 142f, with literature cited. For administrative reforms in the first half of the 9th century, see W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842* (Stanford, 1988), esp. 342ff, and in general his *The Byzantine State Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (= East European Monographs 121, Byz. series, 2) (New York, 1982), whose statistical arguments are dubious in the extreme (see the critical remarks of R.-J. Lilie, "Die byzantinischen Staatsfinanzen im 8./9. Jahrhundert und die *stratiotika ktemata*," *BSl* 48 [1987], 49–55; J. F. Haldon, "Byzantium Transformed," *The International History Review* 11.2 [May, 1989], 313–19), but whose general point—that a series of administrative "reforms" took place in the first half of the 9th century (although I would question the extent to which there was a programmatic element to these, and see them rather as a process of "rationalization" of an entrenched, but at origin ad hoc, system which had evolved over the preceding 150 years) is surely correct.

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centuries mirrors both the increased importance of armies in the period after the begin-
ning of the Muslim conquests as well as the bias and interests of the sources themselves,
which could hardly avoid the political-military matter of everyday life. But the evidence,
when examined carefully, actually says very little about the real power and authority of
such officers, at least until the ninth and tenth centuries; and then it is clear that their
authority was supreme primarily in military affairs, or matters related to the mainte-
nance of the armies—the preparations for war, production of weapons, organizing of
supplies and livestock for the troops, and so on. Whether the *strategoi* were ever actually
involved in anything more than a very general overseeing capacity in civil affairs re-
mains unclear for lack of evidence. But I suspect they had little to do with this side of
the running of their group of provinces, or *thema*.[19]

    This is borne out to an extent by the recent work of Kaegi, who has suggested very
plausibly that in the last months of the Roman effort to retain control over districts in
northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine the emperor Heraclius was forced to re-
place a number of governing officials with officers of a more clearly military compe-
tence, both to preserve central authority and prevent local separatism or separate treaty
negotiations with Muslim leaders, and the better to organize defensive operations to
preserve what was left of Roman territory. There is no evidence that these were exarch-
like plenipotentiaries, however, but rather that Heraclius was replacing civil (and some
military?) personnel who had proved unreliable in the crisis. Kaegi notes that Arabic
sources mention officers dispatched to take charge of regions referred to as the Ajnad
(early Muslim military provinces) of Damascus, Emesa, and Palestine;[20] and as I have
also recently suggested, modifying and extending a line of argument first elaborated by
Irfan Shahîd, these were districts established by the conquerors on the preexisting pat-

[19] For a good survey of the role and position of the thematic *strategoi* in the 9th to 11th centuries, see
Ahrweiler, "Recherches" (cited note 12 above), 36ff; for the 7th and 8th centuries, see Winkelmann, *Rang-
und Ämterstruktur* (138–140), who stresses the almost entirely military character of the functions of these
officers, even at the end of the 9th century. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, compiled in 899, lists the
"bureau" of the thematic *strategos* as consisting of entirely military or paramilitary officials; the civilian and
judicial officials of the theme are listed separately, under their respective central bureaux. See N. Oikono-
mides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe-Xe siècles* (Paris, 1972), 109.16–111.5; cf. 113.28ff (general
*logothesion,* including chartularies of provincial treasuries and thematic *epoptai,* tax assessors, and *dioiketai,*
fiscal administrators); 115.14 (chartularies of the bureau of the military *logothesion,* based in the *themata*);
121.6 (*protonotarioi* of the bureau of the *sakellion,* based in the *themata*). While it is clear from the *Taktika* of
Emperor Leo VI, and a range of other sources of the 9th and 10th centuries, that the *strategos* was the chief
imperial official in his theme (see *Leonis imperatoris tactica,* in PG 107, cols. 672–1120 [also *Leonis imperatoris
tactica,* ed. R. Vári, I (proem., const. 1–11); II (const. 12–13, 14, 1–38) (*Sylloge Tacticorum Graecorum,* III)
(Budapest, 1917–22)], see 680, 684 for example, and Ahrweiler's comments, "Recherches," 36–38, with the
sources cited), his civil authority remained mostly supervisory and delegated, and the entirely military
nature of his command establishment in the later 9th century implies an originally entirely military func-
tion, even if in practice his authority was more extended than this at times.

[20] See W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Changes in Military Organization and Daily Life on the Eastern Frontier," in *He
Kathemerine Zoe sto Byzantio,* 507–21; also idem, "The Frontier: Barrier or Bridge?" in *Seventeenth Interna-
tional Byzantine Congress, Major Papers* (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1986), 279–303. It is possible that the passing
reference to a "general" captured by the Persians on Rhodes in the later eastern chronicle of Thomas of
Emesa refers to such an officer. It is certainly far too vague to provide reliable evidence of the presence of
a "thematic" organization established already by Heraclius, as suggested by M. Oeconomides and Ph. Dros-
soyianni, "A Hoard of Gold Byzantine Coins from Samos," *RN,* 6e sér. 31 (1989), 145–82, see 172–73. For
Thomas of Emesa: Chronica minora, II, ed. E. W. Brooks, trans. J.-B. Chabot (CSCO, Scriptores Syri, 3;
4) (Louvain, 1904).

tern of the older *ducatus limitaneorum* established in the same areas (probably somewhat restructured under Heraclius, but carrying on essentially the same functions as before).[21] It is highly likely, following Kaegi's reasoning, that the *magistri militum* in command of the various forces which were withdrawn into Anatolia were granted similar powers, and for much the same reasons, and that the origins (and the change in the terms used to describe them, from *stratelates* or *magister militum* to *strategos*) of their later authority as general governors is to be found in the officially recognized but still somewhat ad hoc arrangements adopted by the imperial government at this time.

The theme system thus came into being as armies were billeted across Asia Minor, in the first instance, through a process by which civil administration was subordinated to military priorities and interests, and by which the groups of provinces occupied by each of the late Roman field armies came collectively to be known by the name of that army. The civil administration, modified in various ways, especially in respect of fiscal administration, which was the state's overriding interest,[22] subsisted in an increasingly altered form until, in the early ninth century, probably, the state introduced a series of measures to update the thematic administration and recognize the nature and form of the changes which had taken place.

## IV. The State and its Armies—A Crisis of Resources

It is clear that in carrying out this planned withdrawal the state had to face the problems of both supplying and recruiting its forces in the territory which remained under imperial authority and effective political and fiscal control. And it is at precisely this point that the question of the sources of income, equipment, and provisions for the armies has to be raised. The problem of the origins of the so-called military lands, and more recently what has been identified as the clearly related problem of the role of the *kommerkiarioi,* have played a central role in this connection.

In spite of two attempts recently to reassert the possibility that the emperors in the seventh century deliberately settled troops on the land as a means of providing for their upkeep, there is, as far as I can see, no hint of any formal settling of soldiers by the state on a massive scale of the sort favored by Ostrogorsky and, latterly, both Hendy and Treadgold. Let us look at these two, in part complementary, arguments in greater detail.

First, as a result of a dramatic fall in the gold reserves from the later years of the sixth century,[23] the state was compelled to start paying the soldiers at least partly in copper rather than gold or silver. Gold continued to be paid out on a restricted basis, of course, especially for donatives. But from the early 640s—when, as has been shown, the state could afford to issue its armies with only one third of the usual accessional

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[21] For Shahîd's argument, see I. Shahîd, "Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic," *Byzantion* 67 (1987), 391–403; idem, "Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations," *Byzantion* 69 (1989), 208–43; for an alternative explanation, J. F. Haldon, "Seventh-Century Continuities and Transformations: The Ajnād and the 'Thematic Myth'" (in preparation).

[22] See Hendy, *Studies,* 157ff, 406–29; Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 173ff.

[23] The evidence has been discussed in detail most recently by Hendy, *Studies,* 494, 625–26; see also Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 223–25. The fall off begins in the later 6th century, but worsens considerably from the 620s to the 640s and beyond.

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donative—the finances of the state must have been near collapse.[24] Some changes in the
mode of maintaining and equipping the armies appear to date from this period.

The state may have reduced the burden on the fisc by paying the troops on a rota-
tional basis, according to one suggestion, at least for extraordinary payments such as
donatives (which were normally issued on a quinquennial basis and on the occasion of
imperial accessions).[25] But this can hardly have affected the normal maintenance costs
of the armies. Reducing the numbers of troops may also have been considered, and
indeed carried out in certain areas, but there were again obvious limits, given the situ-
ation and the effectiveness of Muslim attacks, to this alternative.

On the other hand, a reversion to the payment of the field forces largely or entirely
in kind would have gone much of the way to solve the problem. The permanent estab-
lishment of ad hoc praetorian prefects attached to each field army in the sixth century
to ensure that they were adequately supplied—a point first brought out clearly by

[24] For the accessional donative, see Cedrenus (*Compendium historiarum*, 2 vols., Bonn ed. [1838–39]), I,
753, and Hendy's comment, *Studies*, 625; already in Heraclius' reign, in 615 probably, the state had reduced
civil and military *rhogai* by up to 50%, suggestive of the nature of the crisis at that point—see *Chronicon
Paschale*, Bonn ed. (1832), 706. As a further illustration of the state's difficulties, scholars have traditionally
cited, apart from Heraclius' borrowing church plate to help his war effort (*Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C.
de Boor, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1883–85], 302.34–303.3), his supposed order to have the bronze statue known
as the ox melted down for coin to pay the forces in the Pontus (on which see Kaegi, "Two Studies," 90ff;
but see P. Speck, "War Bronze ein knappes Metall? Die Legende vom Stier auf dem Bus in den 'Parastaseis'
42," *Hellenika* 39 [1988], 3–17, who shows that the text in question has been misunderstood—it refers to a
legend that Heraclius melted down a bronze statue into a strongbox for the coin with which the troops in
the Pontus were to be paid. Whether this hypothesis is correct or not, Speck is certainly correct to argue
that bronze would hardly be so rare for coining as to require the melting down of antique statuary). The
shortage of gold—or at any rate cash—with which to pay the soldiers had been felt in Maurice's reign, and
indeed seems to have been a constant problem for emperors of the period from Justinian on, esp. during
the reign of Maurice. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 677ff; Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 131ff; M.
Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford,
1988), 18ff. For attempts by Maurice, for example, to reduce military expenditure, see Haldon, *Byzantine
Praetorians*, 113f; Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian*, 160, 167, 286–87. The establishment of a
number of temporary mints, producing predominantly copper (at Alexandretta, Jerusalem, and Constan-
tia, on Cyprus, during the revolt of Heraclius, and at Seleucia/Isaura and Constantia during the Persian
war), and clearly connected with military activity, emphasizes the point. See Hendy, *Studies*, 415–17. There
are a number of other examples, collected in Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 134–35, showing that this
was a constant problem until the last years of Heraclius' reign.

[25] It has been suggested, for example, that the method of paying *themata* on a 4-yearly rotation described
by Constantine VII as the "old" system was ultimately connected with an evolved version of the quinquen-
nial donatives. See Hendy, *Studies*, 645–51 for detailed discussion. Hendy's suggestion has been challenged,
however: see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival*, 395 note 31, who prefers to think that the later 4-yearly
cycle was a continuation of the traditional, irregularly paid *rhoga;* and N. Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine
Provincial Recruits: Salary and Armament," in *Gonimos*, 121–36, esp. 122–28. Oikonomides argues, in con-
trast, that the 4-yearly cycle (or 3-yearly cycle, according to certain Arabic sources) represents a rationalized
payment structure for thematic troops called up for campaigns away from their home province. There is
something to be said for all three arguments (unfortunately!), since it seems clear that Hendy's analysis of
the cycle, which is given in a 10th-century text compiled by Constantine VII (*Constantini Porphyrogeniti
imperatoris De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, Bonn ed. [1829], I, 493–94; new ed. *Constantine Porphyro-
genitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. J. F. Haldon [CFHB 28] [Vienna, 1990], [C]647–
652), does represent a very much older structure than those of Constantine's own time; equally, Oikono-
mides' suggestion makes good sense in regard to both morale and reliability of the troops, and is borne out
by circumstantial evidence—see Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 300ff, for the recognition by rulers that
the advance payment of the troops generally assured their loyalty.

Kaegi—seems to have continued to play a role in this respect, liaising between the civil administration and the civilian population, on the one hand, and the armies, on the other.[26] That such an official continued to exist until the ninth century is also reasonably clear (at which point he was replaced by a reformed or rationalized establishment headed by, among others, the thematic *protonotarios*).[27] It seems likely that it was the withdrawal of the armies into Asia Minor which marked the moment at which this arrangement became, of necessity, permanent.

At the same time, however, the numismatic evidence shows that finds of copper coin die out almost completely during the later years of Constans II,[28] and the fact of the disappearance of this medium from Anatolian sites over the period in question, together with the proven shortage of gold, would appear to confirm the suggestion that the state began to maintain its forces by some means other than relying upon the use of cash as a means of translating wealth into military effectiveness.

It is thus a reasonable inference that the state faced grave problems in remunerating its armies at this time and thereafter—the massive loss of territories and revenue from the areas overrun by Islam alone must have reduced imperial revenue catastrophically, quite apart from the fiscal problems the state clearly already faced in the later sixth century.[29] And it is equally significant that the districts into which the divisional armies of the various *magistri militum* were withdrawn from 637 or thereabouts appear to have been allotted on the basis of their ability to provide for the needs of the armies in question. The conclusion that the state turned to a system of supporting the armies directly, either through issuing the soldiers with land, according to one theory, or through the levying and distribution of most, if not all, their requirements in kind is unavoidable.[30]

The fact that the later (ninth century and after) term for the regular land-tax assessment was *synone*, whereas in the sixth century and before, this term, rendered in Latin as *coemptio*, referred to the compulsory purchase of provisions, is suggestive.[31] For

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[26] See Kaegi, "Two Studies," 103ff.

[27] See above and note 18; and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 201–6.

[28] P. Grierson, "Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 498–c.1090," in *Moneta e scambi nell'alto Medioevo* (= *Settimane* 8) (Spoleto, 1960), 411–53, see 436, with table 2; idem, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection,* II: *Phocas to Theodosius III, 602–717,* 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1968), I, 6f; followed and elaborated by Hendy, *Studies,* 496–99; 640f (with the numismatic material from archaeological contexts); see also W. Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (= BBA 56) (Berlin, 1989), esp. 145f.

[29] Hendy estimates a probable revenue loss of as much as three-quarters of the income derived during the 6th century: *Studies,* 620. Even if this is only very approximately correct, it indicates the nature of the problem faced by the state.

[30] For the evidence and discussion of this suggestion, see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 227f, and 251–53.

[31] On the *synone,* see G. Ostrogorsky, "Die ländliche Steuergemeinde des byzantinischen Reiches im X. Jahrhundert," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 20 (1927), 1–108, esp. 49ff, 60f; idem, "Das Steuersystem im byzantinischen Altertum und Mittelalter," *Byzantion* 6 (1931), 229–40, see 232; Lemerle, *Agrarian History,* 5ff. F. Dölger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung besonders des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts* (= *ByzArch* 9) (Munich, 1927; Hildesheim, 1960), 51ff, 78, saw the middle Byzantine *synone* still as a compulsory purchase, but there is adequate evidence from the 9th and 10th centuries to show that the term had a broader significance than this: see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 231 and note 74. The entry "synone" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium,* ed. A. P. Kazhdan et al., 3 vols. (New York-

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in the so-called Farmer's Law, which probably dates to the later seventh or first half of
the eighth century, the term used to describe the ordinary state land-tax levy imposed
upon the village community is *ta extraordina,* a Greek rendering of the Latin term *extraor-
dinaria,* a word used to describe precisely such exceptional levies or impositions in kind
in the sixth century and before.[32] This can only be explained by assuming that the state,
faced with a drastic shortage of cash, adopted one of the procedures suggested already,
returning to a system familiar from the fifth and especially the fourth century, of pro-
visioning and, as we shall see in a moment, equipping its troops in kind. Some payments
in gold continued, of course. The legal texts refer to soldiers being remunerated by
both *annonai* and by a *rhoga.* But payments in kind appear to have become a major
element in the state's fiscal operations.[33] And a regularized extraordinary levy in kind
to maintain the newly transferred field armies—referred to initially quite accurately
(according to traditional usage) as the *coemptio* or *synone*—thus becomes in the course of
time the main form in which the land tax was actually assessed, levied, and distributed.[34]

An objection to this is the fact that the collection and distribution of supplies in kind
to the armies would be very expensive in respect of transport and storage. In other
circumstances this would be true, since the movement of large amounts of produce
overland to central points at which troops were assembled would indeed be very costly.

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Oxford, 1991), 3: 1994f, understandably does not make this distinction clear. For the Thracian exception
to the generalized application of *coemptio,* see *CI* (*CIC* II), Bk. 10, ch. 27.1–10 (a. 491–505).

[32] W. Ashburner, "The Farmers' Law," *JHS* 30 (1910), 85–108; 32 (1912), 68–95; repr. in Zepos, *Jus* II,
63–71, see cap. 19 (Zepos, *Jus* II, 66). The point was not lost on Lemerle, *Agrarian History,* 40, 41 note 1,
who notes the fact that the Farmer's Law makes no reference at all to *synone/coemptio* in the traditional sense.

[33] See *Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III. und Konstaninos' V.,* ed L. Burgmann (= Forschungen zur byzanti-
nischen Rechtsgeschichte 10) (Frankfurt a. M., 1983), 16.4; also 16.1, 2; the text was first discussed by
Karayannopoulos and later by Antoniadis-Bibicou: see note 56 below. The second text is edited and dis-
cussed by D. Simon, "Byzantinische Hausgemeinschaftsverträge," in *Beiträge zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte
und zum geltenden Zivilrecht: Festgabe für J. Sontis* (Munich, 1977), 91–128, see 94 (A)2, 7; (B)4 (an 8th-century
legal decision, attributed to Leo III and Constantine V, appended in its older form to manuscripts of the
*Ecloga* as article 19 of that codification).

[34] It is important to note that the change in terminology outlined here occurred at the same time that
the older system of tax assessment—the so-called *capitatio-iugatio* system—seems to have been modified
very drastically. The reasons for this are complex and do not directly concern us here, but one of the key
elements must have been the much greater proportion of surplus wealth extracted in the form of *coemptio*
to support the armies in their "thematic" situation. See Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte,* 115 with literature; and in
detail Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 141–52. Note also that the 9th-century Arab geographer
Ibn Khurradadhbîh, the first version of whose work was compiled ca. 846, includes a passage from an older
source (and one which can certainly be regarded as valid for the 8th century) which remarks on the assess-
ment of a regular tax collected in kind (grains) for the provisioning of the army and placed in granaries or
storehouses. See Abû'l-Kâsim ʿUbayd Allâh b. ʿAbd Allâh b. Khurradadhbîh, Kitâb at-Masâlik wa'l-
Mamâlik, in *Bibliotheca Geographorum Araborum,* ed. M.-J. De Goeje (Leyden, 1870–94); nunc continuata
consultantibus R. Blachère (etc.) (Leyden, 1938–39), VI, Fr. trans. 76–85, see 83. That this refers to the
*synone* seems clear, the more so since almost contemporary letters of the deacon Ignatios of Nicaea refer to
the collection of the regular *synone* (which he also calls *sitarchia*) in kind, assessed on church tenants at the
rate of 6 modioi per person (Ignatios complains that even babies and the very old were counted in the
assessment, but—unless it be taken as a reflection of the often drastic demands of the state—this may be
merely a piece of literary hyperbole), recorded and accurately registered (so that imperial officials should
not claim that it had not already been delivered), and stocked in imperial storehouses or treasuries—*en tois
tou demosiou tameiois.* See Ignatius Diaconus, *Epistolai,* ed. M. Gedeon, in *Nea Bibliotheke Ekklesiastikon Eggra-
pheon,* I, 1 (Constantinople, 1903), 1–64: see ep. 7.20–26; 8.10–12.

And if the state were trying to save its resources, this would seem to be a very inefficient way of achieving this end. But the situation of the seventh century, combined with what we know of the actual distribution of thematic forces in the eighth century and later, provides an adequate explanation. For it is quite clear that the various units which made up each field division were themselves spread across the areas in which they were based. And this meant that the supplies collected could be consumed locally and would not need to be transported great distances. Kaegi long ago pointed out that the thematic system, with its soldiers and units spread across great tracts of the country, was in fact quite an inefficient way of defending the Anatolian hinterland, although it was efficacious in protecting local strongpoints and the indigenous population.[35]

But if we ask why, given this relative strategic inefficiency, the soldiers were so widely dispersed, the answer lies in just this need to minimize the costs of transporting provisions and to attain the closest relationship possible between each unit or group of units and the districts from which they were to be supported. In other words, the dispersal of the thematic forces across the provinces they "garrisoned" reflects not only, or even primarily, tactical or strategic planning, but rather the fiscal and logistical priorities of the seventh-century state, at least in the first instance.[36] This dispersal and localization must also have had important consequences for the tactical structure of the armies— the different corps under their respective *magistri militum* were each made up of a variety of types of unit, including heavy and light cavalry, infantry, archers, and so on. How did the process described above affect this structure and, more importantly, to what extent did the traditional armament and tactical function of such units change or evolve in this very different context? This is a difficult question, and one which has not been raised before. I will deal with it briefly later in this paper.

The process through which the soldiers were armed and equipped must also have changed as a result of the abandonment of the traditional system of cash payments and allowances for weapons, mounts, and clothing. And here the significance of the *kommerkiarioi*, whose lead seals become frequent from the middle years of the seventh century, may be relevant. Several historians have noted that certain seals become prominent at this time, seals on which there is an explicit association between an imperial *apotheke* and

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[35] Kaegi, "Some Reconsiderations on the Themes" (cited note 13 above).

[36] Direct evidence for the dispersal of the soldiers is rare. The Life of Philaretos (see M.-H. Fourmy and M. Leroy, "La vie de S. Philarète," *Byzantion* 9 [1934], 85–170, see 125.34ff), written in the first half of the 9th century about events of the second half of the 8th century, refers to the *stratopedon* of the region where a poor soldier, Mousoulios, served. The word *stratopedon* is ambiguous, since it can mean either military camp or army. My own preference is the second meaning, so that the text is referring to the dispatch of a group of officers from the thematic headquarters (presumably—the text says nothing of where these men came from) to muster the troops dwelling in the region. The circumstances of the account support this—a "chiliarch," together with a hekatontarch and a pentekontarch made up the group (although the Life should not be taken too literally in respect of such details), and this hardly suggests a very large force to be mustered. Furthermore, the account implies that Mousoulios was on his way to the muster—the presumption must be that it was from his home or village, since if there was a "camp" the muster would have been there. This hardly fits with the idea of a permanent military garrison *located at a specific point* in the region; but nor does it contradict the possibility that the state still regarded such soldiers as its "regulars," making up its field armies, even if the reality was somewhat different. See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 67 and 75; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 8–9. There is, incidentally, no contradiction in this line of reasoning, unless one takes the word "garrison" to mean a single concentration of soldiers, as does R.-J. Lilie, in *BSl* 41 (1980), 245.

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a region, or group of provinces within the empire, and which suggest that one official,
sometimes a group of officials, had jurisdiction over a number of dispersed areas.[37]
Contrary to the received view that these are connected with imperial control over trad-
ing in luxury or other goods, Hendy has suggested that the *apothekai* may represent a
system for the disposal of surplus materials from state workshops (silks, gold- and sil-
verware, dyed cloths, and so forth). Private merchants might also have an interest in
these state depots and the system they represented.[38] More importantly for our con-
cerns, Hendy has also argued that the *apotheke* system and its *kommerkiarioi* were con-
nected with supplying the imperial armies. On a number of occasions, dated seals of
*kommerkiarioi* and *apothekai* for particular areas can be related to specific military under-
takings mentioned in the sources and connected with those areas; and the inference is
that the *kommerkiarioi* were entrusted with the sale of equipment and weapons to the
soldiers.[39] While not every such seal can be tied in to a particular military undertaking,
the number of those that can is impressive, and the connection is too strong simply to
be dismissed as coincidence.

Oikonomides has raised some objections to this idea, however, particularly with re-
gard to the correlation between certain campaigns and the dates of the seals (by indic-
tional year) associated by Hendy with them.[40] But while this example may not be as
good an illustration of Hendy's argument as he suggested originally, Oikonomides' re-
maining suggestions are equally hypothetical and certainly dubious, especially as re-
gards the movement of the *apothekai* and the *kommerkiarioi*, as evidenced in the seals, and
representing supposedly a movement of the silk industry itself away from the war zone,
from the Anatolian to the Balkan region in the period from the later seventh century
to the middle of the eighth century.[41] Indeed, the seals of this institution seem rather to

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[37] See G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I, pts. 1–3 (Basel, 1972), pt. 1, 135–36, 153f; W.
Seibt, in *JÖB* 30 (1981), 359 (review of Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*); Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige
Reform," 32–34; Hendy, *Studies*, 626ff; N. Oikonomides, "Silk Trade and Production in Byzantium from
the Sixth to the Ninth Century: The Seals of Kommerkiarioi," *DOP* 40 (1986), 33–53. W. Brandes (Frank-
furt) is currently preparing a specific study of this phenomenon.

[38] Hendy's arguments here are, in my view, entirely convincing: *Studies*, 627–29.

[39] Hendy, *Studies*, 654ff. Seibt (review in *JÖB* 30 [1981], 359) suggests that the *kommerkiarioi* were also
responsible for the actual provisioning of the armies. On the whole, and given the continued existence of
the thematic/provincial ad hoc prefects already referred to, whose task this would have been, I think this
unlikely.

[40] Oikonomides, "Silk Trade and Silk Production in Byzantium," 34ff. The problem concerns the dates
of events regarding the Slavs who had been settled in Asia Minor by Justinian II in 688/9 or 689/90 and
who, Hendy argues, were settled as soldiers and equipped by the *kommerkiarios* George for the campaign of
694/5. The argument appears to depend upon a somewhat forced emendation of the text of Theophanes.
Since this article appeared, another dated seal of a *kommerkiarios* has been published, dating to the 7th
indiction (693/4), and throwing weight behind Oikonomides' critique of Hendy's Slav soldiers hypothesis:
see S. Bendall, "Slaves or Soldiers?" *Nomismatika Chronika* 8 (1989), 41–42.

[41] I have dealt with the objections to Oikonomides' arguments against Hendy in *Byzantium in the Seventh
Century*, 235–38. Very briefly, Oikonomides suggests that the *kommerkiarioi* were connected only with the
silk industry, except on rare occasions when they dealt with other wares (such as Slav prisoners/slaves, for
example); and the movement westward of seals of both these officers and the *kommerkia* which they presum-
ably administered reflects a movement westward away from a war zone (in Anatolia) to peaceful regions.
Historically, this does not work, since the Balkans were equally badly affected by warfare throughout the
8th century; more importantly, perhaps, it does not work from the point of view of silk production, which
is a long-term, costly investment, requiring specific climatic conditions (or, at the least, carefully controlled

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follow the warfare, as the strategic priorities of the empire move from one front to the other at this time, a fact which surely reinforces Hendy's basic argument.[42] And while this is not to say either that the *apothekai* were connected only with the provision of military equipment, I have further argued that with the cessation of cash grants for equipment and weapons, the latter had to be supplied and distributed in kind as well, and the *apotheke* system provided an appropriate and available structure for this.

But I do not believe, as Hendy has also suggested, that the state sold weapons and equipment through the *kommerkiarioi* to the soldiers, who paid with revenue from their lands.[43] As we shall see, some soldiers might indeed have held land and may well have been able to purchase equipment privately or through the *kommerkiarioi*. But there are also objections to the majority having been in this position, objections which I have outlined elsewhere. Indeed, since nearly all the known arms- and armor-manufactories of the empire lay by this time in hostile territory, or areas so exposed to hostile action that they can hardly have remained operational,[44] where were these weapons and other types of equipment to be purchased? The state must have had to turn to provincial, and therefore private (even if supervised) production, and the *kommerkiarioi*, with their local subordinates and their storehouses, would have made ideal middlemen to whom the state could farm out this task.

According to an alternative suggestion (which will be discussed below), soldiers were given land on imperial estates from which to support themselves.[45] But even with ten-

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and relatively expensive artificially maintained conditions, both for the mulberry trees and for the silk worms themselves). See A. Muthesius, "From Seed to Samite: Aspects of Byzantine Silk Production," *Textile History* 20.2 (1989), 135–49; eadem, *History of the Byzantine Silk Industry* (Vienna, forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr. Muthesius for much valuable discussion on this subject.

[42] For the movement of the main front to the Balkans from the 730s and 740s, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* 1.1, 138ff; followed by Hendy, *Studies*, 654 note 438; generally, Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, 139ff. Other examples, not cited by Hendy, tend to reinforce rather than weaken his proposal. A seal of 741/2 for the imperial *kommerkia* of the Thrakesion *thema*, for example (Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, 195 and no. 261), may well represent Constantine V's efforts to prepare a counterattack against the usurper Artavasdos, whose rebellion in the Opsikion district began soon after the death of Leo III in the summer of 741 (see P. Speck, *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren* [ = Poikila Byzantina 2] [Bonn, 1982], 71ff; for Constantine's support in Thrakesion see Theophanes [ed. de Boor], 414.31–33). Equally, a seal of either 741/2 or 742/3, for the imperial *kommerkia* of Thessaloniki, and issued under Artavasdos and his son Nikephoros (ibid., 195, and no. 262), may be connected with the same events (Artavasdos sent via the *patrikios* and *magistros ek prosopou* in Constantinople, who had taken his side, to his son Nikephoros, who was *strategos* of Thrace at the time, asking him to collect his troops for the defense of Constantinople: see Theophanes, 415.12ff). Similarly, a seal of the imperial *kommerkia* of the eparchies of the God-guarded imperial Opsikion, dated 745/6 (ibid., 195, and no. 263), may well be connected with Constantine V's attack on north Syria and Germanikeia—see Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, 139; Theophanes, 422.11–13. Of course, the *kommerkiarioi* or *kommerkia* in question may also have carried on other functions as well as organizing or administering the supply of military equipment, esp. arms, to soldiers; but the coincidence of date, place, and event is again striking.

[43] Hendy, *Studies*, 633ff.

[44] See Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 239. In the 10th century, at least one of these establishments—that at Caesarea in Cappadocia—appears to have been operational once more, and may therefore have been only temporarily disrupted: see the reference to imperial armormakers as *exkoussatoi* in a mid-10th century letter of Archbishop Basil Elachistos (R. Cantarella, "Basilio Minimo. II," *BZ* 26 (1926), 3–34, letter to the emperor Constantine VII). See below, note 130.

[45] Hendy, *Studies*, 637ff; Treadgold, "The Military Lands and the Imperial Estates in the Middle Byzantine Empire" (cited note 15 above).

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ants to carry on their agricultural labor and produce an income for them (equivalent, in effect, to the later *pronoia*), it is difficult to see how such holdings came to be reduced to the degree of penury implicit in the case of the soldier Mousoulios and others from the later eighth and ninth centuries.[46] For surely in making such grants the state would have taken some steps to protect such lands against alienation and impoverishment, and there is not a shred of evidence that such measures (such as were taken in the tenth century, for example) were carried out. The provision of soldiers with land (as opposed to the acquisition by soldiers of land through other means) can at best have been a slow and partial process.

Indeed, the available textual evidence from the eighth and ninth centuries is either silent on the relationship between soldiers and land, or positively assumes that there was no connection between land and military service. There was, as we shall also see in a moment, no *obligation* upon soldiers' families to support them, even if they often did contribute toward their upkeep and maintenance.

The probability thus remains strongest that it was indeed the *kommerkiarioi* who supplied the troops with their equipment by means of requisitions and the extraction by the state through these officials of certain forms of tax or corvée (both in materials and in the skills and labor required to produce finished goods). We know in some detail how this system operated in the later ninth and tenth centuries, albeit no longer through the *kommerkiarioi*, and it involved in effect the state, through the local military administration in each province, contracting out the production of certain quantities and types of weapon or items of equipment.[47] This is very different from the more centralized and more strictly controlled system of production based upon an imperial monopoly in state-controlled *fabricae* or manufactories, which had operated until the first half of the seventh century and which is described in some detail in both narrative and legislative sources.[48] And it seems highly likely that it was during the seventh century that this new system itself came into being, as we know so many other aspects of the middle Byzantine administrative apparatus did too.

The conclusion is, of course, that the state did not need to issue soldiers with land to maintain them properly. But other arguments for the state's issuing soldiers with land have also been adduced. Both Hendy and Treadgold, for example, have suggested that the state settled soldiers on land which belonged to the imperial estates, pointing out that, whereas in the sixth century and before the state seems to have possessed fairly extensive lands in the provinces of Asia Minor (in particular in Bithynia, Caria, Pamphylia, Phrygia Salutaris, Pontus, and Cappadocia I and II), it appears to have had no such lands by the twelfth century. The difference has been explained by the plausible

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[46] Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 50f, 58, and the discussion below.

[47] In the 9th and 10th centuries, it was just such a system, supervised ultimately by the theme *strategos,* which operated and through which the state armed its soldiers. See Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 319–22; idem, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 238–42; idem, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions,* 236.

[48] See Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 670–71; Justinian, *Nov.* 85.1; Maurice, *Strategikon (Das Strategikon des Maurikios,* ed. G. T. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg [ = CFHB 17] [Vienna, 1981]), I, 2.11; Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 318ff.

suggestion that such estate land was granted away by the emperors to soldiers in return for military service.[49]

Now there is no reason to reject this hypothesis in its entirety. There is no doubt that the state did give land to individuals, from among whom it intended to recruit soldiers. Emperor Maurice is supposed to have decreed the forced transfer of a number of Armenian families to Thrace so that soldiers could be raised from them. There are other examples from the sixth century.[50] It is likewise apparent that the Slavs whom Justinian II transferred to various districts of Anatolia in 688/9 or 689/90, together with their families, also provided soldiers. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the only means of supporting such large numbers would have been by grants of land. The principle is fairly clear and has been discussed in detail by several historians—to draft in new populations, whole communities and families, from among whom soldiers could be conscripted. In the tenth century, it is clear that the practice of granting land to refugees, whether or not in return for state service, was well established.[51]

But one point needs to be stressed. In the case of mass settlement, these were ethnic groups and, if the Slavs of the second half of the seventh century are anything to judge by, were organized as such under their own leaders, similarly to the late Roman *foederati* or, much more probably, the *laeti* (less independent) of the Western Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries.[52] Like the earlier *laeti*, the Slavs were intended by Justinian II to operate in conjunction with Byzantine troops. Similar examples, from areas outside the empire, suggest that the practice was not unusual in this period of generalized demographic decline and manpower shortage.[53] So that while it is not, in itself, a new principle, neither must it be seen as a generalized means of recruitment and supporting

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[49] See the references to Hendy and Treadgold in note 45 above.

[50] For Maurice's order, see F. Macler, trans., *Sébéos, Histoire d'Héraclius* (Paris, 1904), 54f; Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian*, 127f, 147, 177.

[51] See, for example, P. Charanis, "Ethnic Changes in the Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century," *DOP* 13 (1959), 23–44, repr. in idem, *Studies on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1972), II; idem, "The Transfer of Population as a Policy in the Byzantine Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3.2 (1961), 140–54, repr. in his *Studies*, pt. III; H. Ditten, "Zur Bedeutung der Einwanderung der Slawen," in Winkelmann et al., *Byzanz im 7. Jahrhundert*, 73–160, see esp. 151–57, and 152–54, with extensive literature and the relevant sources, on the transfer under Justinian II in 688/9. For the 10th century, see the passage at *De Cer.*, 694.22–695.14, and the discussion below.

[52] For the ways in which such federate bands were organized and supported, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 612.13; the *laeti* were barbarian prisoners or refugees, occasionally also voluntarily admitted to Roman territory, settled in the empire, placed under prefects responsible for one or more groups across a province, and given lands (*terrae laeticae*), in return for providing recruits for the army; see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 620; Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte* (cited note 1 above), 207ff. Federates were settled in both halves of the empire during the 5th century; and while the institution of *laeti* is known only from the West, in particular Gaul and Italy, the principle cannot have been unknown in the East: the transfers of population of the 7th century appear to have followed along remarkably similar lines. For the 3rd to the 5th century there are many examples: see E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* I: *De l'état romain à l'état byzantin (284–476)*, ed. J.-R. Palanque (Paris-Bruges, 1959; Amsterdam, 1968), 78, 233; II: *de la disparition de l'empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)* (Paris-Bruxelles-Amsterdam, 1949; Amsterdam, 1968), 42, note 2.

[53] See, for example, the case noted by T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy, A.D. 554–800* (Rome, 1984), 88 and note 14: the Duke of Istria settled Slavs on deserted lands in the 8th century.

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soldiers through grants of land, for which there is, of course, no evidence at all. In fact, the probability that the captured Slavs were given land on a "laetic" basis makes the idea that the land they were given was drawn from imperial estates more likely. For part of the purpose of introducing such new populations—as the sources sometimes state explicitly—was the revitalization of the rural population and the bringing back into cultivation of abandoned or deserted lands from which the state could then derive a revenue. Imperial lands paid not only regular taxes, of course; the tenants also paid a rent to the relevant state bureau. Such a policy will thus have been to the considerable advantage of the state.

But once again, I do not believe that this can have accounted for more than a relatively small proportion of the total number of soldiers. Perhaps more importantly, there is nothing in the tenth-century legislation, nor in the evidence which I shall consider in a moment from the eighth and ninth centuries, to suggest that this sort of arrangement lies behind the "military lands" of the later period.

Finally, the clear evidence for a personal and hereditary military obligation during the eighth and ninth centuries, together with the fact that the Macedonian legislation states quite explicitly that until the time of Constantine VII the military lands were neither protected by law nor did they have any special juridical status, an important point recently emphasized once again by Górecki, makes any argument to the effect that such lands had been established in the seventh century as a deliberate act of policy quite untenable.[54]

## V. The Question of the Origins of the "Military Lands"

For the purposes of the present discussion we will define "military lands" in the simplest sense as holdings of varying extent, held by a person who was entered in the military registers as owing military service hereditarily to the state, which service was supported in respect of basic equipment and, to a degree, provisions, from the income derived from that land. Eventually, the land itself came to be regarded as inalienable.

What evidence is there, therefore, for the relationship between soldiers and land? It derives largely from a small number of legal texts, probably of the first half of the eighth century, from hagiography, and from individual references in letters or in narrative histories and chronicles, until we meet the legislation of the Macedonian emperors in the tenth century. As we will see below, the late Roman evidence for soldiers' fiscal status and land is also relevant.[55] From all this material, I think we are justified in drawing the following conclusions.

In the first place, there seems little doubt that by about 740, and probably already well before this time, some soldiers were being supported for their military service by their families and relatives. By the same token, it appears that they could also own their arms and military equipment (a clear contrast with the earlier period, when such items always remained ultimately the property of the state); and that they were expected to

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[54] A point emphasized by Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," 201 note 98; "Die byzantinischen Staatsfinanzen," 50–51. For Górecki's views, see below with notes 74 and 76.

[55] The sources, with minor exceptions to be introduced below, are discussed in detail in Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 41–76. The hereditary element will be addressed below.

replace items of equipment and mounts at their own expense. Two legal texts of this time in particular, which I will examine in greater detail below, make this abundantly clear. But there was no obligation on the families of soldiers to support them—both texts in question deal with the consequences of what we would term breaches of contract between different members of such families regarding the outgoings on equipment provided by the household, the income from booty and state payments received by the soldier, and the degree of reciprocity between the two.

The first of the two texts has been dated by its editor to approximately the middle of the eighth century, probably to the joint reigns of Leo III and Constantine V.[56] It represents a ruling on an obligation outstanding between a soldier and his father-in-law, in which the latter's contribution to the soldier's military service and the appropriate level of compensation is at issue. The key element lies in the fact that the father-in-law has the right to receive back a proportion of what he invested in his son-in-law's maintenance and equipment, if the latter later leaves the household. The assumption behind the ruling is that the agreement by which the son-in-law moved into his father-in-law's household is now ended—and that the son-in-law is therefore no longer contributing to the household. There is no need to assume, of course, that the household was in any way *obliged* to support the soldier: the ruling merely represents the conditions under which a mutually beneficial contractual arrangement could be terminated.

The second text comes from the legal compilation the *Ecloga,* issued by Leo and Constantine in 741, chapter 6.2, and deals with the case of brothers, one a soldier, who jointly inherit the parental estate and household.[57] It illustrates a similar point as in the first text. Here the ruling is that the brother in military service, and those who continue to work the land or farm the estate (the extent to which those involved are landlords or actual peasant exploiters is unclear), should divide their incomes equally if (in the absence of any formal agreement stipulating otherwise) the soldier decides to leave the household permanently within ten years of the parents' decease. If the separation occurs between ten and thirteen years of this event, the same division occurs, with the proviso that the soldier retain his military equipment, which is exempted from the division of property. If the separation occurs after a period of thirteen years or more of common ownership of the parental estate, then the soldier is to retain everything he has earned as a soldier after the said thirteenth year.

Two points need to be made. First, the soldier's income was regarded as contributory to the common household; concomitantly, the soldier is clearly regarded as being supported by the household, at least to a degree—this is certainly the case in the first text referred to above. If this were not the case, there would have been little purpose to the legislation, which appears to have been established to regulate a problem which might arise or had already arisen. The soldier would simply have kept his military equipment

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[56] Edited by D. Simon, "Byzantinische Hausgemeinschaftsverträge," see 94, and note 33 above for context and date of the text. Apart from Simon's commentary and discussion (ibid., 95–100), the text has also been discussed by Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," 196f, and Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits," 130ff.

[57] Ed. Burgmann, 220–222 (see note 33 above). The text was first drawn upon briefly by Karayannopoulos, "Contribution" (see note 9 above), 498–99, although he passed over the importance of the text in this respect; and by Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Études d'histoire maritime* (see note 12 above), 105–6, who sees it, as does Oikonomides (see below), as evidence for military lands in the formal sense.

*and* his pay, as well as his share of the inherited property, according to traditional legal prescription. The other brother or brothers would likewise have received their portion, but none of the soldier's income—which, it is important to note, had always enjoyed a specific statute, defined as *peculium castrense/stratiotikon pekoulion*, which exempted it from such subdivision or infringement—a statute which *Ecloga* 6.1, immediately preceding the second of these two texts, makes abundantly clear.[58]

Second, since the horse, weapons, and so on are specifically excluded from the division of property (unlike his other income), the implication must surely be that the remaining brother(s) may have had some claim on them. They were therefore specifically exempted in the interests of the state. Again, there is absolutely no reason to think that the household had been in any way *obliged* to support the soldier, a point I have emphasized elsewhere: the specific situation outlined in the *Ecloga* passage means simply that in this case the household had been a supportive element and should therefore receive appropriate compensation for its investment. It is worth emphasizing the fact that, if the subdivision of the property were simply a matter of apportioning the joint wealth of the brothers, the graded nature of the *Ecloga* stipulations would have been irrelevant. Instead, the jurists who drew up the clause clearly saw the need to compensate the household or estate for the soldier's departure up to a period of ten years. Thereafter, the soldier's income was assumed to have covered some aspects of his maintenance, and he kept horse and weapons; after thirteen years, his obligations were quit.

This interpretation is supported by the legal decision attributed to Leo and Constantine mentioned already, which again seeks to regulate a possible conflict of claims over property or income owed to one side or another of two contracting parties. In the case of the *Ecloga* text, the whole point is that there was no written contract, hence conflict might arise.

There is absolutely no suggestion in either case that the household had been originally obliged to support the soldier. Merely that, in the specific examples envisaged (which probably reflect actual cases brought to law), it had contributed to his costs and maintenance in one form or another, and was therefore legally entitled to compensation if the soldier left before he had acquitted his debt. More importantly, the decision attributed to Leo and Constantine contains an implicit emendation of the traditional regulations pertaining to military *peculium*, since it clearly grants the father-in-law a claim on this normally inalienable property of the soldier, whether or not he was still a minor, as the analysis of the text's editor, Dieter Simon, shows. This is crucial. It suggests not only that households could and did support soldiers, but that this contribution had been juridically recognized in the right of the contributing parties to make a claim on the

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[58] Soldiers' property derived, by whatever means, through their military service was defined as *idiokteton:* see *Ecloga* 16.1; full references (from Codex Justinianus, Basilica, and the so-called military codes) at Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 54 note 94, 71 note 126. This *peculium castrense* was differentiated in classical Roman law from property derived through inheritance or other income not connected with military service. See, for example, J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 B.C.–A.D. 235* (Oxford, 1984), esp. 231ff, and A. Dain, "Sur le 'peculium castrense'," *REB* 19 (1961), 253–57. See also note 128 below.

hitherto untouchable military *peculium* for recompense.[59] The very fact that such matters appear to have been dealt with in the imperial court, and merited such explicit treatment in the *Ecloga,* is itself not without significance. It suggests that such conflicts were likely to arise more often than just occasionally.

The fact that by the early eighth century (at the latest) soldiers' service could be partly supported by their households is now generally accepted. But there is still no evidence, certainly not from any of the texts discussed so far, that military service was juridically bound to the land, or that families had a formal *obligation* to support a family member who was a soldier. In passages from the Lives of Philaretos, written down in the first half of the ninth century and describing events of the second half of the eighth century, and of Eustratios, composed in the later ninth century and purporting to describe events earlier in the same century, poor soldiers are rescued from disciplinary proceedings at the hands of the local military staff by the saints, who lend their own horses to soldiers whose horses have died. The stories make it quite apparent that these are soldiers who were responsible personally for the maintenance and expenses of their military service, but there is still no formal connection with land evident.[60]

In a letter of 801, to which Oikonomides has drawn attention, Theodore the Studite refers to Empress Irene's abolition of the imposition upon soldiers' widows of payments which appear to have been made in lieu of their deceased husbands' military service.[61] Oikonomides has argued that this text can be understood to imply that a connection already existed from this time, and even from before the reign of Leo III, between military service and soldiers' property; but, although this is a possible interpretation, I would argue that we might equally be faced with a straightforward connection between military service and fiscal compensation imposed on soldiers' families, in which the na-

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[59] For the basic elements of military *peculium,* implicitly modified by *Ecloga* 16.2, see the preceding article (16.1). This important change, which can only have been justified legally on the grounds that the contemporary situation and the practices it produced conflicted directly with the traditional legal framework, was noted briefly also by Simon, "Byzantinische Hausgemeinschaftsverträge," 99. Both these texts need also to be understood in the light of traditional practice relating to the rule governing legal associations, reflected partly also in *Peira* 21.3 (p. 81) (Zepos, *Jus* IV, 1–260, following *Bas.* 12, 1.50/7–9, based on *Dig* 17.2.52, dealing with the partition of property between brothers, one of whom is still subject to the *patria potestas*), according to which the income (*siteresia*) from the *strateia* of a soldier who has joined with a civilian in a formal *koinonia,* a legal association, belongs to the joint property of the said association. In this text, of course, *strateia* might be understood in its specifically 10th-century technical sense, or simply as *militia,* state service.

[60] *Vita Philareti* (ed. Fourmy, Leroy) (cited note 36 above), 125.34ff; *Vita Eustratii,* ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, in *Analekta Hierosolymitikes Stachylogias,* IV (St. Petersburg, 1891–98), 367–400, see 377.3ff. By the same token, later 9th- and 10th-century Arabic sources, sometimes using much older material from the earlier 9th century or before, refer to the fact that Byzantine provincial soldiers had to provide their own minimum provisions for the first days of the muster: see Ibn Khurradadhbih, 85; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 45 and note 73. For the Arab geographers, their value and their reliability, see J. F. Haldon, "Kudama Ibn Dja'far and the Garrison of Constantinople," *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 78–90; challenged by W. T. Treadgold, "Notes on the Numbers and Organisation of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army," *GRBS* 21 (1980), 269–88; vindicated by F. Winkelmann, "Probleme der Informationen des al-Ğarmi über die byzantinischen Provinzen," *BSl* 43 (1982), 18–29; in turn challenged by Treadgold, "Remarks on Al-Jarmi," *BSl* 44 (1983), 205–12.

[61] The letter is in PG 99: 932; new edition by G. Fatouros, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* (= CFHB 31, 1.2) (Berlin 1992), ep. 7.61–63.

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ture and degree of property held by the family in question played no role in the state's calculations, since military service for such soldiers was certainly hereditary.[62] The ways in which the property and in particular the military equipment of soldiers supported by their families in the two legal texts referred to was disposed of would reinforce this suggestion.

Whatever the correct interpretation, there does seem to be clear evidence for soldiers supporting themselves from the early eighth century, and this can reasonably be assumed to be something that was by then already well established. My suggestion is that this developed in the context of the state's difficulties in adequately supplying and provisioning its provincial forces, a reflection of the awful problems of solvency it faced in this period, together with the inevitable and well-known consequences of soldiers' settlement on a permanent basis in the provinces and their consequent embedding in local society. In particular, we must remember that the acquisition of land would have been a perfectly normal consequence, as evidence from the sixth century clearly demonstrates. And soldiers' land would have shared in the special fiscal status granted to soldiers themselves, most particularly in respect of immunity from certain extraordinary *munera*.[63]

But I would still reject any idea of the state formally setting up by legislative act a special category of such soldiers. Indeed, the very heterogeneity of recruitment methods and types of soldier familiar from the eighth, and certainly from the ninth and tenth, century would reinforce this suggestion. Thus it is clear from texts of the later ninth and tenth centuries that there were at least two types of provincial soldier in the "self-supporting" category: some supplied their own equipment and mounts, as well as their provisions; other, poorer soldiers were responsible for their mounts and weapons, but received also *siteresia*, supplies and provisions, from the state. Indeed, two texts strongly suggest that the proportion of soldiers who could actually properly support themselves in provisions, as well as equipment and horse, was quite small. And by the tenth century, if not before, the sources reveal a whole category of soldiers who, while registered on the military rolls, were supplied almost entirely by state impositions (and requisitions) upon the wealthy for horses, equipment, and servants or esquires.[64]

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[62] Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Recruits," 136. He also suggests that the term *oikos* in the *Ecloga* text discussed above might be interpreted as "estate," which is certainly one meaning of the word from the 6th century (see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, p. 1517). But "household" subsumes also any property, whether in land or movables, attached thereto, and seems to me better, given the uncertainty of our information. On the letter of Theodore the Studite, see also P. Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer fremden und der Versuch einer eigenen Herrschaft* (Munich, 1978), 382, 807 note 392, who interprets it rather as a "death duty" (Totensteuer). But this misses the point of the relationship between military service and soldiers' families implicit in the letter; see also the remarks of the editor of the new edition, vol. I, 150 note 39.

[63] Landholding by soldiers and their families similarly came to underlie military service to a degree in Italy over the same period: see Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers* (see note 1 above), 101–8. For immunity from certain state corvées, see *Dig* 50.5.10 for the 6th century and before, and the references given below. In this regard, it is important to note that soldiers were no different from any other category of persons granted a special fiscal status in respect of their state service: cf. *Dig* 50.6; *CI* 10.66.1 (a. 337); 2 (a. 344), repeated at *Bas.* 54.6

[64] See, for example, *Vita Lucae Stylitae*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites* (= SubsHag, 14) (Brussels, 1923), 195–237: 201.14ff, where Luke is described as subject to military service, but supporting himself in respect

When we look at the measures taken by Emperor Nicephorus I in respect of soldiers' lands and their obligations, we again have the impression that, while the land from which the soldier was supported, or supposed to be supported, was relevant in the state's *fiscal* calculations, it had not yet been related bindingly to military service, which was still attached to the individual soldier. For military service was almost certainly hereditary from the later seventh century at the latest, as I will suggest below, although exactly when it became so is uncertain. It had not been, except by custom in the *limitanei*, in the sixth and early seventh centuries. My own preference is for an early reintroduction, under Heraclius, although there is no explicit evidence for this. R. J. Lilie suggests the reign of Leo IV but, as we will again see below, the letter of Theodore the Studite can be used to demonstrate that it was already in force considerably earlier than this.[65] Either way, the hereditary nature of military service is a crucial element in our understanding of the relationship between soldiers' property and military service.

There are a number of other texts, however, which can shed a little more light on the question of this relationship. Among the notorious "evil deeds" ascribed to Nicephorus I by the chronographer Theophanes was the stipulation that soldiers who could not afford their military equipment and service were to be helped by contributions (the

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of provisions, in contrast to others who, "as was the custom for those who are enrolled," received a *siteresion* from the state. Similarly, the soldier Michael Argyromytes, in the Life of Nikon Metanoeites (ed. Sp. Lampros, "Ό Βίος Νίκωνος τοῦ Μετανοεῖτε," in Νέος Ἑλλ. 3 [1906], 129–228), 211.14ff provided his own supplies, and again the hagiographer notes that this is unusual. In the *Taktika* ascribed to Leo VI (see note 19 above), 4.1 and Epilog., 57, the theme *strategos* is instructed to call up for active service from those registered as soldiers only those who were economically able to support their duties adequately; see also the reference to the treatise on skirmishing, below. For those registered, but without adequate equipment, and the imposition upon the wealthier for their mounts and expenses, see Leo, *Takt*. 18, 129f. and esp. 20, 205, with the references in note 97 below.

These definitions are, of course, economic. An alternative is to define the soldiers by function, so that the first two groups above can be seen as having provided the majority of the infantry forces of each province. Some of them will have provided seasonal garrison troops for strong points and fortified places; others, perhaps the less well-off, may have served as servants and esquires to the elite soldiers while on campaign, or as scouts and look-outs along the frontiers, if they inhabited such districts. Another group will have been represented by the full-time, permanent staff and "core" troops of each *thema*, including both the *proeleusimaioi* (retinue or staff) and the *eklektoi* or *epilektoi* who are referred to in the narrative sources. It is probable that the latter terms are meant to include not only professional volunteers, and poorer draftees equipped by state requisition (referred to above), but a number of the better-armed and equipped thematic *stratiotai* as well—these are the soldiers Leo VI hopes the general will be able to select from his *thema*, and such soldiers are clearly referred to in the later 10th-century treatise on skirmishing warfare dedicated to Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas: see, *Le traité sur la Guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)*, ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu (Paris, 1986), cap. 19.3ff (109.18ff) and 184ff. See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 79 and note 145; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, 250 with texts.

[65] Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 36ff, with Lilie's criticisms, *BSl*, 41 (1980), 242f; Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," 199f. See below and note 80. The exact status of the "hereditary" element in the recruitment of *limitanei* remains unclear. Military parentage seems to have been a necessary qualification, but individuals were not obliged to join their fathers' units, even though this often seems in practice to have been the case. Individuals whose fathers had served in units of *comitatenses* would be equally eligible; while sons of *limitanei* were clearly able to advance beyond their original positions in the military establishment in general. For the evidence, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 653, 669 with note 145.

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form of which is unclear, but to the value of 18½ *nomismata*) to cover their costs and their public taxes.[66]

Two points, however, are generally disregarded in discussions of this passage. First, these measures are in the context of a general calling up of impoverished soldiers, many of whom the state was actually transferring (along with their better-off fellow peasants and comrades-in-arms) from Asia Minor to Thrace, where they were to be resettled. Their poverty was a result of both their original condition and of the forced transfer and selling of their property (for which, the text implies, they were themselves responsible—again, no state-protected "military holding" is envisaged here, although one may read into the text the possibility of a forced sale of property to the state at fixed prices, which affected the better-off in particular).[67] Both of these measures appear to have been novel—not only the contributions of cash to equip the soldiers in question, familiar from tenth-century texts (see below) and known as *syndosia*, but also the communal payment of their normal fiscal dues (the land- and hearth-taxes), familiar in respect of ordinary taxpayers, of course, who were unable to cover their tax payments, but now applied for the first time to poorer members of the community who were also soldiers.[68]

Second, the first part of this order has generally been understood to mean that the emperor wished to recruit previously unregistered poor persons into the army and equip them through communal subscription. As I have argued before, however, this is a most improbable interpretation. It seems much more likely that these "poor" were already registered, but as they were considered unable to provide adequately for their service they were generally not actually called up.[69] Once more, it would seem that while landed property was relevant to the state's concerns about supporting its armies, there existed even at this stage no firm juridically defined bond between the possession of land and military service. I would argue that Nicephorus' measure recognized, and was intended to help, the sort of impoverished soldier typified by Mousoulios, mentioned above, and served to bolster considerably the number of soldiers available to local officers and, at the same time, more effectively exploit the resources available to the state. How effective it was is unclear, although a passage from a later ninth-century Life, that of Eustratios, has the saint once more giving his horse to a poor soldier.[70]

[66] Theophanes, 486.10ff, esp. 486.23–26; and the discussion of Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 62–64; P. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople. Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1958), 117ff.

[67] Theophanes, 486.10–22. As Speck (*Konstantin VI*, 383 and notes) stresses, of course, the source of Theophanes' text is particularly hostile to Nicephorus, and presents his measures in the worst possible light. See also Ai. Christophilopoulou, "He oikonomike kai demosionomike politike tou aftokratoros Nikephoros a'," in *Mélanges K. Amantos* (Athens, 1960), 413–31.

[68] In this respect I would agree rather with F. Dölger (*BZ* 36 [1936], 158) but only partly with Lemerle (*Agrarian History*, 62f, in reference to the payment of the 18 1/2 *nomismata*), who sees nothing new in the communal payment of the taxes of those called up, since he regards them as newly enlisted from among the poor. On Nicephorus' measures in general, see Christophilopoulou, art. cit.

[69] Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 50 note 87. The verb in question—*strateuesthai*—should be understood as "call up," rather than "enroll/register" (for the first time). Later texts bear this interpretation out. Lemerle's view is an unlikely interpretation, since the mass recruitment by conscription of all such poor persons would surely have hopelessly inflated the army and overwhelmed its disciplinary and administrative procedures. On the calling up of those able to cover their service expenses, see the points made in note 64 above.

[70] See above, and *Vita Eustratii*, 377.35ff. Of course, the passage may well be a topos, and this must be borne in mind when dealing with such hagiographical texts. Measures referred to in the *De Ceremoniis* of

The analysis of these texts, and a number of other passages from ninth- and tenth-century saint's Lives and collections of miracles, has shown that until the tenth century there seems to have been no binding legal connection between the possession of land and military service for the types of provincial or thematic soldiers discussed so far. This does not mean that as time passed (i.e., over the eighth and ninth centuries) the state did not come increasingly to view the possession of landed property as an important prerequisite for the registration of soldiers in the thematic armies. Since military service for certain categories of soldier appears to have been hereditary (although it is unclear on what basis the differentiation among such categories was made), the combination of this with the possession of land would, in theory, have ensured the state of a core of soldiers in each district available for local military service, supporting themselves to one level or another, around whom mercenary and short-term recruits could be assembled when necessary. During the first half of the tenth century, however, the state decided to classify these possessions and to formalize the conditions under which they could be held or transferred by registering them (up to a certain value) in the local military and fiscal codices, chiefly to protect them from the expansionist land-grabbing of "the powerful"—a broad category, representing both magnates and lesser local landlords who could expand their own possession at the expense of the weaker members of their fiscal community.[71] The reasons for this action are generally agreed upon. In addition, the

Constantine VII (*De cer.* 695.21ff) mention the fact that those registered for military service who were not able fully to meet the costs of their duties were to be assisted (fiscally) by the attribution to them of *syndotai* or contributors (from the same fiscal unit, it must be supposed); see also ibid., 660.6–7, where 1,200 soldiers are to be equipped by this means; and the literature in note 72 below. That these measures were not always very effective, or that state officials may often have ignored them in practice, is clear both from the Life of Eustratios, where the poor soldier appears to have received no such assistance, as also from individual references—a letter from Patriarch Nicholas I, for example, asking for release from military obligations on behalf of a widow who cannot afford to equip her son (in J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* [AOC 6] [Paris, 1960], II, 50.13–131; a similar case in the Life of Euthymios (*Vita Euthymii Iunioris*, ed. L. Petit, "Vie et office de S. Euthyme le jeune," in *ROC* 8 [1903], 155–205, repr. L. Clugnet, in BHO 5 [1904], 14–51), 72.19ff. In the later 10th century, the treatise on "guerrilla" or "skirmishing" warfare along the eastern frontier remarks that soldiers, in spite of their fiscal privileges and favored status, might still be oppressed and reduced to penury by state officials (and note that this refers to all soldiers, not just those in possession of "military holdings"). Clearly, whatever measures the state adopted, problems of both application and enforcement away from the capital presented a constant difficulty. See Dagron-Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, cap. 19.6 (109.34ff); also ed. with Eng. trans. by G. T. Dennis, in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*. Text, trans., and notes (CFHB 25, DOT 9) (Washington, D.C., 1985), 137–239 (text 144–238), see 216/7.

[71] For the process, see Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 41–65; Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," 199ff. The latter rejects the principle that, as well as defending its recruitment and fiscal base against "the powerful," the state may also have found it more convenient to register land, which could be more readily measured, controlled, and assessed in terms of the burdens attached to it: "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," 201; also *BSl*, 41 (1980), 244. It is important to stress, however, that this reason was never proposed as the first cause or the only reason for the change which, as Lilie quite rightly notes, resulted primarily from the danger presented to the state's resource base by "the powerful." A similar misinterpretation is also made by M. Gregoriou-Ioannidou, *Stratologia kai eggeia stratiotike idioktesia sto Byzantio* (= Hetaireia Byzantinon Spoudon 4) (Thessalonike, 1989), 61f, who seems to ignore the fact that, in order to protect the economic base upon which both the recruitment of soldiers and its own income depended, registering the lands in question was the only feasible answer. The argument for "ease of administration" is complementary, not independent.

For the conflict between state interests and those of the powerful, and definition of this group, see

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gradual extension of the obligations from individual families to the lands which served as the basis for their service, which seems to have taken place during the first half of the tenth century, also meant a greater flexibility for the state in extracting the resources thus available—the land could be measured, fixed, and permanently registered; the wealth it produced could be converted into soldiers in the form of personal service of the possessors, or through commutation, or through substitution.

By the tenth century, therefore, the state had come to rely upon the presence in each theme of a number of soldiers, owing service hereditarily, whose ability to fulfill their duties depended upon landed property (and originally, probably, other forms of income). Where families were too poor to bear this burden, their communities covered their state fiscal taxes and contributed to the costs of their equipment, at least in theory (although, as we have seen, there are several examples where this system appears not to have worked very efficiently). It was anyway the responsibility of the local *strategos* and his subordinates to select, from the total of those registered, those who were actually capable of carrying out their duties. Those families bearing military obligations—registered as *stratiotikoi oikoi,* to use a term which first appears in the tenth century—who did not or could not provide a soldier, or who were not asked by the administration to do so, paid instead a certain sum, the proceeds from which were used by the local military establishment or the central *logothesion* to pay for other, less well-equipped soldiers registered on the military codices in the same fiscal districts, or for their equipment (the *syndotai* of the legal texts), or for the raising of mercenary troops.[72]

The system of military lands thus evolved in a haphazard manner, although I would guess that its value was soon perceived by state officials (certainly by the time of Nicephorus I, whose legislation in this respect, in spite of the hostility of Theophanes' report, was clearly intended to assist the poorer registered soldiers), so that the state exploited the potential of this option when it could. But we must remember that there existed side by side with these soldiers also full-time, mercenary, or professional soldiers who made up the core of each provincial division, as well as those recruited for the duration of a campaign. And we must remember, too, that the actual potential of a *thema* was much larger than the number actually (or usually) called up for particular campaigns—the evidence of late ninth- and tenth-century military treatises makes this clear.[73]

During the tenth century, as the lands of the middling and poorer peasants from whom the bulk of these provincial soldiers were drawn came increasingly under threat from the power of provincial magnates and holders of imperial and ecclesiastical titles, offices, and privileges ("the powerful"), and especially as a result of the great famine of

R. Morris, "The Powerful and the Poor in Tenth-Century Byzantium: Law and Reality," *Past and Present* 73 (Nov., 1976), 3–27.

[72] See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 49f, 60, note 1( Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 14; Dagron-Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 267. For the term *stratiotikos oikos* (in opposition to *politikos oikos,* used of households not registered as having military obligations) see Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 12ff; Lemerle, *Agrarian History,* 133ff.

[73] See esp. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber,* 316ff (cited note 14 above); Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 79–80 and notes; G. Dagron, in Dagron-Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 262; and G. Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique au X$^e$ siècle: À propos des constitutions tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI," *CRAI* (1983), 219–42, see 234 and note 69.

the year 927–928, the state had to intervene to protect the holdings which were the basis for military service. Hence the legislation of the Macedonian emperors. It is worth pointing out that here it is not a question of badly directed or corrupt fiscal policies on the state's part in the pre-Macedonian period which led to this situation, although this may have played a role.[74] We should not forget that just as the military lands represented a relatively long-term development, so the rise and growth of an aristocracy—a magnate class which combined both provincial landowning and imperial office- and title-holding with a near monopoly on key state positions in both the military and civil administration of the empire—was also a relatively long-term evolution. Beginning in the later seventh century with what I call the pseudomeritocracy of that period, this state class or elite gradually establishes itself as a distinct social group which, by the tenth century, is in a position to challenge the interests of the state—interests which it had itself to represent to a certain extent, thus embodying a fundamental contradiction within the state structure—and endanger the lands from which the state both drew its income and supported its soldiers in the provinces.[75]

## VI. The Military Lands and the Strateia from the Tenth Century

The exact details of the workings of the system of military lands in the tenth century has been the subject of several recent contributions. Arguably the most useful has been that of Górecki, who has tried to refine out of the contemporary legislation a more exact description of the relationship between state, fiscal community, and military holdings. Most importantly, her findings have confirmed the crucial development of the early tenth century, namely the formal recognition in legal texts that military obligations had clearly begun to be associated with the land which actually supported the *strateia* rather than with the individuals (families) to whom it was attached and who bore the hereditary burden of this state duty. In particular, she has stressed the fact that a parallel existed between the state's treatment of ordinary fiscal land registered within the rural community (as understood in the fiscal sense), on the one hand, and "military" or "stratiotic"

[74]See, for example, D. Górecki, "The Strateia of Constantine VII: The Legal Status, Administration, and Historical Background," *BZ* 82 (1989), 157–76, at 171. While it is clear that the policies followed by Leo VI favored the state elite, there is no reason to suppose that such policies were anything more than an effort by the emperor to prevent abuses of traditional rights and ordinances in respect of preemption and the freedom to purchase and transmit land, a point already made by Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 90–91.

[75]See my comments in *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 153ff, 387–95; A. Kazhdan, "Ob aristokratizacii vizantijskogo obščestva VIII–XII vekov," *ZRVI* 11 (1968), 47–53; and see F. Winkelmann, *Quellenstudien zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (= BBA 54) (Berlin, 1987), esp. 143–219. It is important to bear in mind the sources of wealth of the middle Byzantine social-economic elite. Certainly, those families closely connected with the provinces and with the military administration appear to have possessed considerable landed wealth. See J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (= Byzantina Sorbonensia 9) (Paris, 1990), 207–37; Hendy, *Studies*, 85–90, 100–107. Equally, however—and certainly in the 11th and 12th centuries—many individuals and families belonging to this elite possessed relatively modest lands, investing instead in titles, offices, and the *rhogai* and other rewards attached, which in turn purchased both a clientele as well as movable wealth in the form of cash, bullion, plate, jewelry, precious cloths, books, and so on. See in particular A. Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav gospodstvujuščego klassa v Vizantii XI–XII vv.* (Moscow, 1974), 26ff. For all, a degree of dependence upon the ruler of the moment and the imperial administrative-bureaucratic apparatus, with its system of titles and cash pensions, was an essential element in both their rise to, maintenance, and reproduction of positions of power, influence, and authority.

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land on the other.[76] The inalienability of stratiotic land and the urgency of the emper-
ors' efforts to protect such property from encroachment are clear results of her analysis.
She has also stressed the dynamic nature of the evolution of this institution, which dur-
ing the tenth century became the focus for a great deal of state legislation.[77]

Górecki's conclusions, which in their general import concur with those of Lemerle
and myself, can be summarized as follows:

(1) it was under Constantine VII that the *strateia,* a term denoting both the subject
of the rights and duties attached to the possession of "military land" and, therefore, to
the conditions of tenure of such land, was institutionalized and enshrined in imperial
legislation. This is a point which is, in itself, well known;

(2) the military land was an object of "specific rights and duties"; it was exempted
from commercial traffic and its legal status was irreversible;

(3) the state could attribute military status to any piece of land at the request of its
owner; it could also allot unoccupied military land already so registered to a nonmilitary
household (partial *strateia*), regardless of whether the head of the household or a family
member was enlisted as a soldier. By this means smaller properties could jointly provide
the income to maintain an active soldier;

(4) the term *adoreia* refers not simply to an exemption from military obligations of
an impoverished *stratiotes* (who can thus no longer support the attached service) and his
transferral to garrison service, as traditionally thought, but in addition to the conse-
quent attribution of his holding by the state (when the sequence of persons of stratiotic
status liable for the fiscal dues of the property in question failed to provide a suitable
tenant) to a *nonstratiotic* peasant. The purpose was first to ensure the continued (fiscal)
productivity of the property in question, and second to ensure the continued contribu-
tion of such properties, as partial *strateiai,* to the maintenance of a soldier. It would, in
addition, have as an effect the extension of military obligations (as opposed to active
military service) to nonmilitary subjects of the state. The *adoreia,* therefore, functioned
in a way similar to the regulation known as *sympatheia,* by which civilian landholders
within a fiscal community who had fallen on hard times had their properties temporar-
ily relieved of fiscal burdens until the owner could restore them to good order (a maxi-

[76] Górecki, "The Strateia of Constantine VII," 159, 163–71. Note that the term *strateia* has a number of
overlapping, but different, technical meanings. In addition to meaning imperial or state service in general
(*militia*), it could refer also to simple military service, and—with a more technical significance—the institu-
tion of *strateia* as employed in the present discussion, referring to a specific relationship between the state,
a soldier, and the land from which the income to support his military obligations was derived.

[77] I would only challenge Górecki's interpretation in one respect, namely, her misrepresentation of my
argument in *Recruitment and Conscription* regarding the shift from a personal and hereditary to both a
personal and a land-associated *strateia,* to suggest that the shift occurred ca. 950 ("The Strateia of Constan-
tine VII," 164). To the contrary, I stressed (a) the fact that the change was only partially recognized in the
legal texts of the mid-10th century, and was probably only necessitated across a period stretching from
the later 9th century to the time of Constantine VII; and (b) that the administration and functioning of
the system of recruitment based on military lands was therefore *dynamic* and *evolving* (e.g., *Recruitment and
Conscription,* 48ff, 62ff). There is no problem here in recognizing what Górecki rightly calls "a diversity of
the various simultaneously occurring phases . . . of the evolution of the *strateia*" (loc. cit.). But I would take
issue with her statement that "all possible forms of the *strateia*" could exist both before and after 950 (her
date), if by this is meant, say, the early 9th or later 8th century. Only for the later 9th and 10th century do
we possess enough evidence to say that, as a result of a changing economic and social context, the evolution
of the *strateia* promoted such a variety of parallel forms.

mum period of thirty years was usually granted). After this time, such a property was normally declared a *klasma* and was detached from the fiscal community and attributed to a new owner or holder by the state. In the case of military holdings, as Górecki points out, the second stage—that of the *klasma*—did not apply; instead, the state attempted first to maintain the holder of the *strateia* through the appointment of contributors (*syndotai*); if this did not work, then the military version of the *sympatheia* was invoked, and the land in question was placed in *adoreia*, by which it was granted to another. The state could attribute it to one of a number of persons, according to a list of priorities outlined in the novel in question (beginning with the holder's heirs, proceeding through impoverished *stratiotai* of the same fiscal district, and ending with impoverished civilian taxpayers of the same fiscal unit), in order that its productive capacity be maintained, both in respect of the normal state taxes and the obligation to support a *strateia*. Crucially important is the fact that the person attributed with the "adorated" holding(s), if they were not already registered as such, now received the status of a registered *stratiotes*, with both the fiscal burdens and the privileges (*pronomia*) which accompanied it.[78]

To repeat Górecki's full argument here would necessarily involve going through the texts in detail once again, and I shall avoid this. But a number of points can be made which arise from her conclusions. In the first place, the case with regard to *adoreia* is particularly important. It reinforces the impression we have already from other sources that the Byzantine state had by this time substantially amended traditional Roman concepts of private property. The state had the right to confiscate or reattribute private property with or without compensation, depending on the situation, just as it had the right to determine, within the context of the fiscal community, how the rights of preemption were to be exercised. Górecki has noted that land that was so treated was

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[78]On *sympatheia* see Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 81. The key texts for the statute of *adoreia* are: (1) Constantine VII's novel of 945–959, "On Soldiers" (Lemerle's novel E), in Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 8 (222–226), see 224 (= F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches 565–1453* [Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, Reihe A, Abt. I] I–IV [Munich-Berlin, 1924–65], no. 673; II, 2nd edition P. Wirth [Munich, 1977]); (2) *De cer.* 695.21ff; (3) a passage in the early 11th-century compendium of legal cases known as the *Peira* (in Zepos, *Jus* IV, 1–260), 143 (cap. 36, 2); (4) a difficult passage in the *Taktika* of Leo VI (20.71) refers to the thematic army under the command of a *strategos*, including "both those who serve in the army, and those who are *tes legomenes exautoreias*," as being free of all fiscal servitude. Lemerle notes that Ducange had already seen in this term the Latin *exauctoratio*, "discharge/release" (Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 142, note 1), and wonders whether the term might actually reflect a confusion with *adoreia*, in view of the expression used in the *Peira* text, *ta ex adorion*. This is a likely hypothesis, but it has different implications for the two different interpretations of the term *adoreia*. For Lemerle, this would mean that soldiers or tenants temporarily relieved of their usual stratiotic obligations retained military status. But this surely goes without saying, since such persons were usually sent to serve with lightly armed *apelatai* units (on which see Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 135 note 1; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 14), and would as a matter of course retain military status. There would be no need to differentiate between the two types of soldier. For Górecki's hypothesis, in contrast, the statement makes more sense, and indeed reinforces her suggestion, so that the passage refers to those previously of civilian status, now given charge of a stratiotic holding, and therefore enjoying also military *pronomia*, along with the soldiers. See Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 119–20, 142 and notes; and contrast with Górecki, "The Strateia of Constantine VII," 169–71. On the privileges of stratiotic status, see novel E (cited above), 225 (β): the new holder enjoyed the same preferential status as the *stratiotes* proper, and neither he nor the fisc was permitted to sell the land from which the *strateia* was supported. On the statute of *klasma*, see Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 81f, 162f; and esp. N. Oikonomides, "Das Verfalland im 10.-11. Jahrhundert: Verkauf und Besteuerung," *Fontes Minores* 7 (Frankfurt a. M., 1986), 161–68, where recent literature is also noted.

of an equivalent juridical status to the classical *ager publicus* of the Roman republic and Principate, although she also stresses that no direct connection can have existed—the parallel reflects rather the nature of the problem faced by the tenth-century legislators and the legal and administrative instruments at their disposal. The shift in the ways in which private property was conceptualized in regard to the state and its interests seems to be noticeable only from the later ninth and tenth century, as Kazhdan has pointed out, reinforcing the impression that it was only at this time that the state became aware of the threat to its resource base and the need to intervene in the traditional assumptions of private property law. It is, nevertheless, important to current discussion of the nature of the military lands and the duties attached to possession of a *strateia*, as we shall shortly see.[79]

In the second place, her presentation confirms the fact that, by the middle of the tenth century at the latest, the state had been encouraged by circumstances to view the burdens attached to military status as binding also on the land from which military service was supported as much as on the person of the registered *stratiotes*. By the same token, of course, such lands also enjoyed the privileges traditionally associated with soldiers' property—exemption from all but the standard fiscal burdens (land tax and *kapnikon*). All the texts discussed make this assumption.

In the third place, the clear contrast between *stratiotes*, referring to the person registered as possessing a military holding, and *strateuomenos*, meaning the actual soldier supported by such a holding, or a group of such holdings in the case of partial *strateiai*, is reaffirmed. The two could still be one and the same person: as we have seen, hereditary military service was related to the person, not the land which had come to be recognized as supporting that service. The legislation reflects the fact that the holder of a *strateia* was, in theory at least, still the one who carried out the military service, although force of circumstances had already by the later ninth century allowed for a replacement or representative of the registered *stratiotes* to carry out the actual soldiering—hence the apparent contradictions in the texts, which represent in fact no contradictions, but merely the fluidity and evolving nature of the institution in the tenth century.[80]

It is difficult to say when the possibility of commuting actual military service for a payment was first introduced. An important source in this respect is the Life of Euthymios, who was born in the 820s, and whose biography was written ca. 900. His father was registered as holder of a *strateia*, the obligations attached to which fell to the family. Euthymios' mother could only support these burdens after the death of her husband by registering her son in his stead. The element of personal service here is quite clear.[81]

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[79]The discussion on and evidence for this shift in Roman legal principles is presented by G. G. Litavrin, *Vizantijskoe obščestva i gosudarstvo v X-XI veka* (Moscow, 1977), 23ff, and summarized by A. Kazhdan, "Do We Need a New History of Byzantine Law?" *JÖB* 39 (1989), 1–28, see esp. 14ff; see also Górecki, "The Strateia of Constantine VII," 171ff.

[80]I have presented the evidence for this development in *Recruitment and Conscription*, 41–65. For a good example of the difference, see Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. III, Nov. 2, 204 (ascribed to Romanus I, but actually from a novel of Nicephorus II—see note 89 below), where it is stated that military land alienated within 30 years from the date of the legislation should be returned without compensation to the original holder, "unless after its alienation enough remains to the *stratiotes*, such as is sufficient for the *strateuomenos* to support the *nean strateian*."

[81]See *Recruitment and Conscription*, 56; also *Vita Lucae Stylitae*, 200.8–9; *Miracula S. Georgii*, ed. J. B. Aufhauser (Leipzig, 1913), 19–21; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 145 and note 1 for other texts.

But the implication of the registration of the young Euthymios is that by so doing the widowed mother would no longer be held liable fiscally to the state for service which was attached to the family, since it could once more be personally acquitted. In the event, it is clear from the Life that Euthymios was never called up, presumably because he was at that stage too young (as we have seen, thematic officers were exhorted to select the soldiers actually called out carefully, according to their ability to support their duties, both economically and in respect of their age and fitness). Other letters of the later ninth and early tenth century confirm both this personal aspect of the *strateia* and the possibility of avoiding being called up on account of youth or old age.[82] Apart from the Life of Euthymios, however, Oikonomides has drawn attention to a passage in a letter of Theodore the Studite in which the writer praises Empress Irene for relieving soldiers' widows of payments demanded by the state in place of their husbands' military service, which the widows themselves could not, of course, provide. It is clear from the Life of Euthymios that this human measure was soon either abrogated or, perhaps more likely, ignored by the provincial officials of the military *logothesion*. Nevertheless, this suggestion takes the commutation element back at least to the later eighth century, and probably even earlier—on the grounds that this exaction is ascribed to rulers before Irene who had been Orthodox, therefore, before Leo III.[83]

Oikonomides understands both the Life of Euthymios and the letter of Theodore, however, as reflecting military service based on the possession of land, of a military holding in the technical sense. But it must be said that there is no mention of this in the texts in question—what is very clear is that the obligation of military service was attached to an individual and his family, and was hereditary—when the father dies, the son has to step in; if there is no son, then the state exacts a payment in lieu of such service, which goes to the fisc for the payment of other soldiers. For the hard-pressed state of the later seventh or eighth century, this would not be an illogical step, even if it meant hardship on such families—the case of Mousoulios, from the Life of Philaretos, is a case in point, as are those from a later period of Euthymios and the boys mentioned in the letters of Patriarch Nicholas I. I see no reason to assume that this was done on the basis of the possession of lands registered in some way as "military," even if the state, as we have said, took the existence of an income of some sort for granted. Once again, therefore, I would argue that we take Constantine VII's preamble to his novel "On Soldiers" of 945–959 at face value—the practice of military service based on the possession of land, which was by custom hedged about with various conditions regarding sale and transmission, was only formalized in the tenth century.[84] The implication is that the obligations connected with military service had been extended to include the possession of land not by legislative act, but by long tradition. The conclusion we may draw

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[82] See note 64 above, and Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 47f, 56ff. See in particular two letters of the patriarch Nicholas I asking for special exemptions for boys who have been called up (under different circumstances in each case) to fulfill their stratiotic obligations personally, since their families are unable to support the fiscal alternative. See J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* (= AOC 6) (Paris, 1960), nos. 30 (119–20) (also in *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters,* ed. and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerink [= CFHB 6] [Washington D.C., 1973], no. 169 [496]); 50 (130–31).

[83] Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits," 135–36; see notes 61 and 62 above for Theodore's letter.

[84] Zepos, *Jus* I, 222.

is that it was the hereditary aspect which had been the core of the system thus evolved. Only in the tenth century was this modified.

There is one important additional conclusion, however. For if Oikonomides' conclusion regarding the time from which a payment in lieu of military service was demanded by the state—the early eighth century, perhaps before—is correct, then the hereditary nature of military service must go back at least that far, too. It would suggest that even though the reign of Heraclius cannot be proved to be the time at which it was reintroduced for regular soldiers of the *comitatenses,* his reign or that of one of his immediate successors remains the most likely period at which this would have occurred.

I have spent some time on these points because Górecki's conclusions contrast starkly with those of Gregoriou-Ioannidou, who has tried to show that there was no connection between military service and the land in the tenth century; and that the system of military lands develops more or less directly out of the old *limitanei*-type of service. This is clearly an attempt to revive the views of Karayannopoulos, and I believe it largely fails.

In the first place, to claim that there was no connection between land and service in the Macedonian period, a connection which is quite evident in the legal texts of the tenth century and which most scholars now agree existed, seems to me to fly in the face both of the texts themselves and the logic of the situation. Again, Górecki's recent work confirms this and throws more light on how the legal stipulations of the tenth-century texts might be more clearly understood.[85]

Gregoriou-Ioannidou's main line of argument is, quite simply, that the military lands, like other lands, carried merely a fiscal burden, whereas military service remained attached only to individuals. Military status brought with it certain privileges (as we have seen), so that it was not the land occupied by a soldier which brought with it military obligations, but rather the military status of the soldier which brought the status of military land to his property. This has long been recognized, of course, and as far as it goes, is entirely correct.[86] But it ignores the historical nature of the evolution of the *strateia:* the whole point of the debate in the last few years has been to stress how the institution was developing and changing over time in response to the demands of the state and the social context in which it existed. Further, in criticizing those who have argued for a connection between lands and military burdens—the *strateia*—she chooses to define this connection (and to represent others to have so defined it) in an overly narrow way, to mean that military lands bore the obligation of recruitment or military service. It is this, I think, that leads her to argue so strongly for no connection at all between land and service. On the basis of two texts in particular (Constantine VII's novel "On Soldiers" [945–959] and a novel of Nicephorus II Phocas)[87] she rightly points out that persons already enrolled on the military registers who are attributed by the state with parts or the whole of abandoned or otherwise deserted military holdings cannot have been expected to serve twice, once for their own property and once for that which they have newly received. Of course, individuals could not serve as two sol-

[85] See Gregoriou-Ioannidou, *Stratologia* (cited note 69 above).

[86] See, for example, Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 51–52 and note 90; 54, note 94.

[87] Zepos, *Jus* 1, 225; and Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. III, Nov. 18, 247–248 (Dölger, *Regesten,* no. 720); see Gregoriou-Ioannidou, *Stratologia,* 62ff.

diers at the same time. But on the basis of this point she argues that, in consequence, there was no connection between the land and military service, and thereby completely misses the point. For the land itself *never* had the *obligation* of "military service," or even of furnishing a recruit, and I have certainly never argued this. But what had happened by this time was that the connection between military service and the land which supported the family from which a registered soldier was drawn, whether active or not, had become explicit. Hence the obligation *to provide the resources* with which to equip or provision a soldier was apparent—again, all the texts which refer to soldiers and the basis of their military service take this connection for granted. The *strateia* was perceived as attached to the land as well as to the person registered on the military rolls who held it, for the simple reason that while the individuals inscribed on the military registers actually served, the resources to support this service were drawn from the income derived from agricultural production.

Part of Gregoriou-Ioannidou's difficulty arises from the fact that she insists that the term *baros*, burden, applied to the state's rights in respect of land, can mean *only* tax or fiscal burden in the very narrowest sense, not the obligation to provide support for a soldier.[88] But there is in practice little or no difference between the appropriation of resources in the form of cash, labor, or crops, for example, and the appropriation of resources in the form of a particular type of service. That the Roman and Byzantine state (and indeed most medieval states) regarded these different forms as equivalents is clear from any examination of the ways in which the state extracted revenues from its territories and those who carried out the productive labor on them. There seems to me no valid reason for denying the fact that the obligation to support military service was just as much a *baros* on lands defined as "military," as the public taxes were on all lands within the empire. Individuals carried out the service; land provided the resources, directly or indirectly, to support that service. The *strateia* was hereditarily attached to the person inscribed on the registers, but they could not fulfill their obligations without an income, and this came from the exploitation of the land. It is surely apparent that in the very act of the state stipulating, in a legislative instrument such as the novels of the emperors Constantine VII and Nicephorus II, the amount of inalienable land necessary to support the *strateia*, land itself came to be associated with the *strateia*, and the *strateia* was conceived as associated as much with land as with individuals. This is particularly clear in the final paragraph of the novel of Nicephorus II dealing with the increase from a value of 4 pounds to 12 pounds of gold of the amount of military land henceforth to be regarded as inalienable: military holdings (*stratiotika ktemata*) which had been alienated within a period of fewer than thirty years from the date of the legislation were to be returned "to the responsibility and service of their own *strateia.*"[89] It is equally clear in the case of soldiers found guilty of murder. The lands of such a person, which would normally have been awarded in part or whole as compensation to the victim's family, are at all costs to be kept intact. If there are no relatives willing to undertake the *strateia*, then another, unrelated person should take up the properties or holding in

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[88] Gregoriou-Ioannidou, *Stratologia*, 63f.

[89] The main text of the novel: Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 22, 255–256, for the first three paragraphs; the fourth, and last, paragraph seems to be that mistakenly edited as para. 3 in Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 2, 203–204 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 595), actually a novel of Romanus I, Constantine and Christopher.

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question (*tous topous*) and fulfill the *strateia*.[90] In other words, the connection between the original holder of the land and his family, responsible for the *strateia*, is severed, and the land is handed over to someone who can fulfill the relevant obligations. But these obligations can then only be seen as related to the land itself, a point emphasized by Lemerle's commentary.[91] Gregoriou-Ioannidou argues here that this is an exceptional case,[92] thus neatly sidestepping a problematic text. In fact, if the land had no military service attached, there is no reason why it could not have been given in compensation. The point is, once again, that while people provided soldiers, it was land that supported them. And this is made even clearer in a case reported in the *Peira* of the judge Eustathios, in which a *kourator* is found guilty, along with an unspecified number of co-defendants, of attacking, injuring, and robbing a tax collector. Note that this is *not* a case of murder. As compensation to the injured party, all his property, except that which is subject to a *strateia* (and the dowry brought by his wife), was to be confiscated and awarded as compensation to the tax collector. Should the property in question be insufficient to compensate for the loss to both the tax collector and the state (in respect of stolen and unrecovered revenue), then the property of the co-defendants was to be similarly treated.[93] It is assumed that the normal regulations for the transfer of the land or property subject to the *strateia* would then have been implemented, which meant that, in the case of there being no relatives, it would be placed in the hands of an unrelated party. It seems again fairly clear that while the principle of hereditary obligations attached to a registered household was respected, the obligations—the revenues to support the obligations which came with the *strateia*—were seen as connected with the land. It was inevitable that the state should, according to the situation and circumstances reflected in different items of imperial legislation, regard military service as connected with both. We should recall here that imperial legislation was *functional*—different items placed the emphasis differently, on either the soldiers or their land—according to the particular problem under discussion, both within the same document and across different documents.

It was thus perfectly possible for a registered *stratiotes*—any person registered as the holder of a *strateia* (whether he served actively or not)—to be in possession of two "military" holdings, since each could provide such resources. There is no need to argue that one person could not serve in a double capacity here.[94] And presumably the state, in

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[90] See Zepos, *Jus* I, 248/3.

[91] *Agrarian History*, 128; see also Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 59 and note 2.

[92] Gregoriou-Ioannidou, *Stratologia*, 79f.

[93] See *Peira* 66.26 (249–50). The key phrase is τὴν ἅπασαν αὐτοῦ περιουσίαν μὴ ὑποκειμένην στρα- τείᾳ. . . . Two other cases in the same section illustrate the point. In the first (*Peira* 66.24 [249]), a man and some associates kill a *skeptrophoros* (also a soldier, a standard-bearer). The decision reached after the murderer's property had been assessed (along with that of his co-defendants) was that the said property should be divided up in compensation, with the exception of the *strateiai*, and of course the dowry and other property connected with the marriage transaction. In the next case (66.25 [249]), a *magklabites* is found guilty of murder, and again his property, with the exception of the *strateia* and the property connected with the marital arrangement, was to be awarded in compensation. It is especially interesting that in the last two examples a portion of the property itself is referred to simply as "the *strateia*"—surely a clear indication of the connection being made between the obligations which that term implies and the land which supported them.

[94] The point is reinforced when we recall that, although some holders of higher or more privileged imperial offices at Constantinople were exempted from fulfilling the obligations accompanying any *strateia*

allotting such lands to registered persons, was both ensuring that labor was available to maintain them in production, and increasing the possibility for the poorer peasants to improve their own productive capacity, all to the state's advantage—this is the main purpose of much of the legislation. As I have argued, *both* personal hereditary service attached to individuals, *and* the association of that service more closely with the properties from which it was supported, are represented in the legislative texts. It is surely obvious that the requirement to serve as a soldier was in effect a type of fiscal obligation: the fact that the families of deceased soldiers were still liable for the expenses of military service, or a proportion thereof, at least from the reign of Irene and, as Oikonomides has plausibly suggested, even earlier, when no individual could be produced to carry out the service in question, suggests as much. That the *strateia* was so easily transformed into a purely fiscal burden from the later tenth century onward bears this out. Indeed, had the *strateia* remained only and always a personal burden attached to individuals, as it was originally, it is difficult to see how it could ever have been generalized as a fiscal imposition, as it was in the eleventh century. More telling still is the fact that lands subject to the fiscalized *strateia* were still exempt from extraordinary state levies, even though they were no longer held by active soldiers or their families, to whom the standard immunities and privileges continued to be attached. In other words, it is the special status of the land which is here significant.[95]

This brings us to a further argument made against the notion that the state came to view land during the tenth century as connected with military obligations. It has been suggested that all the examples of soldiers or groups of soldiers avoiding military service by making a payment to the state instead represent in effect the same phenomenon, that is to say, that there always existed a "fiscalized" *strateia*. According to this position, individual obligations to serve in the army could always be met by a payment to the state. The examples of such a practice from the ninth and tenth centuries, in particular the well-known case of the soldiers from the *thema* of the Peloponnese,[96] are equated with the later full fiscalization of the *strateia* which can be observed in the eleventh century, and it is alleged that there is no difference between the two practices—merely that, in the eleventh century, because the state preferred cash, for a variety of reasons, it tended toward the greater exploitation of this option.

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attached to their household (*oikos*), others were not: even though they actively occupied posts geographically distant from their properties, their *strateia* still had to be fulfilled when there was a general call up (*teronaton*). It is clear from this passage alone, as Lemerle pointed out long ago, that the *strateia* can here only have meant the provision of money, provisions, or other necessities of warfare, not simply active military service. For the text, see *De cer.*, 697.18–698.22; and discussion by Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 136ff; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 59. So much is clear also from two of the cases referred to already from the *Peira* (66.25 and 26), since the two chief accused persons in the cases in question, while clearly subject to a *strateia*, occupy at the same time other positions—one is a *magklabites*, and hence attendant upon the imperial court; the other a *kourator* (although it is unclear whether lay or ecclesiastical) and, from the context, in charge of a property or group of properties in the provinces.

[95] For examples of the *strateia* as a purely fiscal obligation, see Zepos, *Jus* I, 617.5–7 (a.1044); *Actes de Lavra, 1: des origines à 1204,* ed. P. Lemerle, N. Svoronos, A. Guillou, D. Papachryssanthou (= Archives de l'Athos 5) (Paris, 1970), no. 56.91–93 (a.1104); *Actes de Dionysiou* (= Archives de l'Athos 4) (Paris, 1968), no. 1 (mid-11th cent.); M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, *Byzantina Eggrapha tes Mones Patmou* II: *Demosion Leitourgon* (Athens, 1980), no. 54. I shall be dealing with the decline of the *strateia* in a future study.

[96] See *De administrando imperio,* cap. 52 (p. 256), together with the last section of cap. 51, and Lemerle's commentary, *Agrarian History,* 131ff.

It seems to me once again that this both oversimplifies the problem and obfuscates the issue. Two developments need to be distinguished. In the first place, that of the *strateia* and its particular evolution as an institution over the period from the seventh century onward; in the second place, that of the demands of the state for cash or manpower according to constantly changing circumstances. As we have seen, it seems from perhaps as early as the beginning of the eighth or the later seventh century to have been a principle that, where a soldier could not be provided from a registered household at the time of the general muster, that household could be liable to a payment in lieu of military service. In this respect, there is certainly a fiscal aspect to military service which, as we have said already, is in the end no more than one form of the extraction by the state from the producers of surplus wealth. The evidence nevertheless points to the state's preference, at least until the later ninth or early tenth century, for the fulfillment of personal service from those so registered. The examples referred to in the *De administrando imperio,* however, suggest that the state was by this time prepared to broaden and to generalize this procedure to the army of a whole theme, demanding instead either materials (e.g., horses and their harness) or cash. But in both these examples from very different periods it is not in doubt that those thus treated by the state were also holders of *strateiai,* whether they were personally exempt by reason of their particular title or office or not. The state is applying a particular solution to a particular problem it may have faced (about which we can only guess) at a particular moment. This is in stark contrast to the generalized imposition on all classes of the population, including the Church and monastic foundations, for particular military undertakings of demands for cash and materials, a potential which the state seems always to have exercised when it needed to do so. Such impositions were not, of course, regular in the sense that yearly taxes were. On the other hand, the frequency of military campaigns must have affected their incidence, hence the complaints of the population under Nicephorus II, if the reports of Leo the Deacon and, later, of Zonaras, for example, can be trusted. In addition, there is an increasing tendency toward the general fiscalization of the *strateia,* particularly marked from the reign of Nicephorus II.[97] Thus we are

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[97] Wealthy lay and secular persons were often obliged to make contributions in this way. See, for example, *Nicholas I, Letters,* nos. 92. 10–26; 94. 31–40 (in which the patriarch supports the state's extraordinary impositions in view of the Bulgarian war); 150; 183 (in which he opposes the imposition of military burdens upon individual clerics, in the first case, and the renewed general imposition of extraordinary levies on Church lands); *De adm. imp.,* cap. 52, which lists the metropolitans of Patras and Corinth as well as the bishops of the Peloponnese among those who must furnish horses and equipment for the army; Haldon, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises,* (C) 103–112, for horses and mules with pack-saddles to be contributed by metropolitans and bishops throughout the empire to imperial expeditionary forces (a text which probably dates from the time of Basil I); and the reference in the novel of 934 of Romanus I to the contribution made by the whole population to the support of the needs of the armies (Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 5, 205–214 [Dölger, *Regesten,* no. 628], 209). Note the advice of Leo VI in his *Taktika* that the theme *strategos* should require the wealthier in his district to provide mounts and equipment or resources for a soldier, thus arming poor but registered *stratiotai* through wealthy, unregistered persons. See Leo, *Takt.,* 18.129; 20.205. For the application of such measures under Nicephorus II especially, see Zonaras (*Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri XIII usque ad XVIII,* Bonn ed. [1897]), III, 504.12–16; Cedrenus (*Compendium historiarum,* Bonn ed. [1838–39]), II, 368.7–10; and in particular the passage from the Arab geographer Ibn Hawkal (*La configuration de la terre [Kitab Surat al-Ard]*), trans. J. H. Kramers, E. Wiet (Beirut-Paris, 1964), 194; with the discussions of Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 20–21; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 61f; Dagron-Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 278ff. For the generalized fiscalization of the *strateia,* see Zonaras, III, 505.16–506.10, and below.

confronted with two quite different institutions or administrative practices, practices which, as the state's needs evolved, and as the context within which those practices were carried changed, converged to produce a third and, in its turn, quite different institutional procedure.

The point is that the state was becoming more concerned with the sources from which the revenue and provisions for soldiers were drawn by the middle and later tenth century than with the sources of manpower as such, as I believe the texts discussed by Lemerle, Lilie, Górecki, and myself make abundantly clear.[98] This does not mean that individuals and their families did not continue to bear a military obligation, where they were registered, as well,[99] merely that the state's focus of attention shifted as circumstances and necessity demanded. No amount of semantic prestidigitation alters this. For it is surely absurd to argue that the extensive legislation of tenth-century emperors on the question of soldiers and their lands was intended to protect the basis of their military service by formalizing a specific type of tenure (as demonstrated once again by Górecki) subject to a whole range of complex provisions designed to protect its integrity, while at the same time suggesting that such prescriptions were of a simple fiscal nature only, and had absolutely no effect on the juridical statute and burdens attached to the tenant of the property and, thereby, to the property itself. Fiscal burdens were clearly associated with the possession of land, as much as, and as well as, with individuals. Fiscal burdens intended to provide or support soldiers or their service were no different. But by formally defining the nature of the rights and duties attached to the *strateia*, the state also formalized the nature of the fiscal burdens which accompanied the tenure of land which supported this particular type of state service, and thereby made the relationship between land and service more obvious. The fact that nonmilitary persons, not previously registered on the military rolls, received military status when they were attributed by the state with military land makes this clear; just as does the fact that persons previously registered as owing "service" to the *dromos* were transferred to naval or marine "service" by the changes introduced under Nicephorus II.[100] Górecki's observations on the nature of the *adoreia* in this respect, and those of Lemerle and myself on the nature of partial *strateia*, would appear to bear this out. In sum, the argument against a connection between land and military service elaborated by Gregoriou-Ioannidou seems to

[98] The connection between the *strateia*, military service based thereon, and land is made abundantly clear in a Chrysobull of Constantine IX Monomachus dated to 1044: fiscal exemption is granted to a number of "untaxed" peasants, defined as "those who possess no land of their own," "subject neither to the fisc nor to the *strateia* nor to the public post nor burdened with another fiscal service" (Zepos, *Jus* I, 617; K. N. Kanellakis, *Chiaka Analekta* [Athens, 1890], 547). There can be no doubt, as Ahrweiler already remarked long ago ("Recherches," 22), that the *strateia* in this text was understood as bound up indissolubly with the possession of land. The terminology is remarkably similar to that of the mid-10th century: see the Chrysobull of Constantine VII, summarized in a similar document of Constantine X in favor of the Lavra, dated 1060, in which possession of a *strateia* clearly depends on land. See *Actes de Lavra*, I (ed. P. Lemerle, N. Svoronos, A. Guillou, D. Papachryssanthou [Paris, 1970]), no. 33, 30ff; and the mention in a document of 927, in *Actes d'Iviron*, I (eds. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou [Paris, 1985]), no. 1.8–9, of military obligations (*strateiai*) owed by certain persons "for the land" which they had leased. See the editors' comments, p. 107. The point about such texts is that land was clearly understood to support the *strateia*, and contemporaries cannot have avoided relating the two in their efforts to legislate on matters concerning them.

[99] A point made quite clearly at *Recruitment and Conscription*, 49f.

[100] Zonaras, III, 506.3–5.

me to be founded on an artificial distinction between different types of state service and obligation, and a failure to recognize the dynamic nature of the developments of the later ninth and tenth centuries.

In the second place, it is now increasingly recognized that the *limitanei* in the East were more or less phased out or withdrawn by the mid-sixth and early seventh century as the East Roman state came to rely more and more on "federate"-style troops, especially in eastern frontier provinces, as the recent work of Glen Bowersock and Benjamin Isaac has demonstrated. More significantly, while there may in view of the limited systemic and logistical possibilities open to late Roman and early Byzantine administrations have evolved some apparent similarities between the older *limitanei* and the later thematic soldiers and their lands, this is based more on appearance than reality—it is also increasingly clear that the *limitanei* were by no means soldiers given lands or plots by the state as a deliberate policy, except perhaps under Justinian in Africa; rather, they were soldiers who, having once acquired lands, by whatever means, were able to obtain especial exemptions from the payment of regular state taxes. It is worth stressing this: the later Byzantine "military lands" were freed from some extraordinary state impositions, chiefly because in origin they were lands held or owned by soldiers, who received immunity from certain state demands. But they were not freed from the land and hearth taxes, no more than late Roman soldiers had been freed from regular state taxes. The lands of *limitanei*, in contrast, *were* exempt from such regular burdens. The point has been made before by Patlagean. It surely follows that were the *stratiotika ktemata* derived from the lands of *limitanei*, this privilege would also have remained attached to them.[101]

[101] Here the reader is referred to the detailed arguments of G. W. Bowersock, "Limes Arabicus," *HSCPh* 80 (1976), 219–29; B. Isaac, "The Meaning of the Terms *Limes* and *Limitanei*," *JRS* 78 (1988), 125–47, esp. 139ff; idem, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford, 1990). Justinian, in reconstituting the African prefecture, seems to have allowed for the establishment of soldiers, described as *limitanei*, with lands, which they were henceforth to till, as a means of encouraging the resettlement of deserted regions subject to Moorish raids. Cf. *CI* I, 27.2, and Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 663. Soldiers belonging to *limitanei* units were originally exempted from poll tax for themselves and, depending on the nature of their service, certain members of their immediate families (*CTh* VII, 20.4 pr./3 [a.325]; 13.6 pr; 13.7/3 [375]). Their lands were also exempt from regular as well as extraordinary taxes. See Theodosius II, Nov. 24, 1.4 (a. 443), repeated in *CI* XI, 60.3, with the comment of E. Patlagean, "L'impôt payé par les soldats au VIe siècle," in *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique* (cited note 1 above), 303–4 (and on the operation of the taxes on persons and livestock—*capitatio*—and on land—*iugatio*—see A. H. M. Jones, "Capitatio and Iugatio," *JRS* 47 [1957], 88–94, repr. in idem, *The Roman Economy*, ed. P. A. Brunt [Oxford, 1974], 280–92, see 285ff; idem, *Later Roman Empire*, 64ff). Gregoriou-Ioannidou's arguments here drastically misrepresent those of other scholars who have discussed this question, including those of both Lilie and myself: see, for example, *Stratologia*, 47, where we are accused of "denying the strong continuity" in the existence of soldiers' private property from the early Byzantine period and onward. This is quite incorrect—see, for example, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 74. Of course soldiers had private property, both in land and other forms of wealth, a point which has been widely recognized and generally accepted for many years (cf., for example, Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 648 and note 93; 649ff); what we do in fact say is that soldiers did not have property (in Anatolia) closely associated *institutionally* with the fact of their military service before the 7th century. There were before this time, and no doubt there continued to be afterward, soldiers in the armies of the *magistri militum* who had been based in the same area for many years and thereby acquired possessions, land, or family connections. A. H. M. Jones' work amply demonstrates this point for Egypt, T. S. Brown's for Italy. There is plenty of epigraphic and legislative evidence to support this, and all scholars appear to accept the fact. Much of Gregoriou-Ioannidou's presentation on this problem is, therefore, superfluous. Her conclusion (53), while purporting to disagree completely with others, mostly repeats their conclusions: "Thus there are no beginnings to the *stratiotika ktemata*, since soldiers had always disposed of

Work on the tenth-century legislation and its importance for an understanding of the military lands, on the one hand, and of the state's fiscal-administrative structures, on the other, is continuing and will no doubt bring new insights in the near future. In spite of some recent objections, however, I would argue that we have now reached a reasonable degree of agreement on the process by which the military lands came into being over the period from the seventh to the tenth century. More importantly, we can see more clearly the process by which a traditionally informal but significant element in the state's arrangements for the recruitment and the maintenance of soldiers became increasingly a focal point of imperial fiscal-political attention, to be transformed during the tenth century into a carefully regulated and formal "system." In this respect, it would be fair to suggest that what has traditionally been called the "theme system" was, in fact, a product of the tenth rather than the seventh century. For I can still find no evidence for a Heraclian creation of a "thematic system" involving both the granting of land to soldiers and the restructuring of the field forces. On the contrary, all the evidence seems to point to a whole series of developments, some planned by the state, some not, some certainly occurring during Heraclius' reign, while others clearly did not, which combined as they evolved over two centuries to produce what we find reflected in the tenth-century sources.

## VII. The Army in Society

I will stop at this point and turn now to look at the implications of these debates for our understanding of the role and status of the military in the Byzantine world. I will do this by examining briefly the key elements in the relationship between the state and its armies from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, and by putting these in the context of the evolution of Byzantine society as a whole over this period. This will necessarily be a

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private property." This misses the point. But in then pointing out that the term *limitanei* means, literally, soldiers who protect, or who are stationed in, frontier regions (however broadly or narrowly we define them—see Isaac, "The Meaning of the Terms *Limes* and *Limitanei*," 136–38, 146), she makes the assertion that since there were always such soldiers, *limitanei* always existed and were the same, whether they are identified with the later Roman soldiers or the forces of the middle Byzantine *kleisourai*. On the same grounds, she argues that, in consequence, the fiscally exempted property of the *limitanei* continued to exist after the 6th century, too (40, 51, 52). In effect, she deprives the late Roman term of the institutional specificity it had acquired by the middle of the 6th century. For however much we may agree with Isaac that the term *limes* meant at this time simply provinces behind the frontier or, in the case of the East, the eastern desert itself, *limitanei* did have a particular and recognized status, expressed both in their duties, posts, and legal privileges, which differentiated them from soldiers not so designated. In this respect, I would take issue with Isaac's overgeneralized definition of *limitanei* as "simply soldiers serving anywhere in the area assigned to the relevant *dux*" (art. cit., 146). This may be true of the period up to the middle of the 5th century, but the particularly privileged position of the lands or allotments of *limitanei* must surely indicate also a differentiation in juridical situation. We have already seen that the legal status of the lands of *limitanei* was *not* the same as that of the later thematic soldiers. See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 74–75, 77–79; Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," (i) 198; Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 216f (following Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 679); Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, 104ff. There are, unfortunately, many other misrepresentations or complete misunderstandings of the conclusions and arguments of others, including Lemerle (who at *Stratologia*, 32 note 6, is taken out of context and made to say that the state established the military lands in the first place by granting holdings to soldiers. In fact, Lemerle's statement refers to the situation in the middle and later 10th century, and in respect of the particular point he is making, is perfectly correct).

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partial account, related to the specific themes I have taken up so far—there are, of course, a whole range of important "historical sociological" issues which also need to be addressed, which I cannot go into here.

The first point I would emphasize is that there is a clear shift in the political role of the army and of soldiers from the sixth to the eleventh century. The relationship between soldiers and the state in the late Roman period—that is to say, up to the reign of Heraclius, approximately—can be characterized as fairly direct, by which I mean that the intermediaries between these two elements were relatively few, and were on the whole themselves part of the state's apparatus, whether civil or military. This direct relationship can be summed up in a number of points.

To begin with, the state retained, in theory if not always in practice, a strict control over the production and issue of weapons which, whether issued directly to the soldiers, or sold to them, were a state monopoly and passed from state hands to those of the soldiers via specifically laid out and approved routes, which are described in detail in the legislation of Justinian.[102] All the evidence we have for the period before the Islamic conquests suggests that the system did not change in this period. Furthermore, the state directly supervised the provisioning of the field armies, whether permanently settled in a specific garrison town or whether on campaign, through imperial officials specifically appointed to such tasks. This feature is tied into the fact that the state paid and rewarded its soldiers directly, through cash salaries (commuted *annonae* and *capitus*), quinquennial and accessional *donativa,* and field or campaign awards.[103]

Throughout the period with which we are concerned soldiers had a specific legal status, inscribed in Roman-Byzantine law and inherited ultimately from the position of soldiers in the armies of the late Republic, modified and altered during the first century and a half of the Principate. As we have seen, a central element in this was the existence of a specific military *peculium,* which until the modifications which appear to have been introduced during the eighth century meant the right of disposal of property gained through their state service or through inheritance freely, without reference to the *lex Falcidia,* according to which property had to be apportioned among specific groups of relatives before its dispersal elsewhere.[104]

All this meant that, whatever the practical and logistical difficulties which diluted the effectiveness of this direct relationship, soldiers were independent of other social

[102] Justinian, *Nov.* 85, 1; Edict. 8, 3; and Maurice, *Strategikon,* I, 2.11; XII, 8.6; 7. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 670f; Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 114.

[103] For the administrative structures which supported the army in the 6th and early 7th centuries, see in general Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 671–74 (with 623ff as background); Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 113ff; idem, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 221f; Kaegi, "Two Studies," 103ff.

[104] For the privileges attached to military service, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 617, 675; Mommsen, *Militärwesen,* 248f; Patlagean, "L'impôt payé par les soldats," 303–9; for the relevant texts, see esp. *CI* XII, 30; 35.16 (with the reference to unspecified military privileges); 36; and A. Dain, "Sur le 'peculium castrense'," *REB* 19 (1961), 253–57 and esp. *Dig* 50, 5.10 (= *Bas.* 54, 5.10) on exemption for soldiers from certain *munera* or *aggareiai,* including that of billetting; and *Dig* 50, 4.3. Whether soldiers remained free from *capitatio* in the later Roman period (they were clearly not freed from paying the later *kapnikon*) remains unclear—see Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 617 and 675. For the Roman period proper, in which these privileges are rooted, see J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army* (Oxford, 1984), 210–29 (on testamentary privileges), 229–36 (on *peculium castrense*); P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1970), 245ff; MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian* (cited note 1 above), 107ff; and E. Sander, "Das Recht des römischen Soldaten," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 101 (1958), 152–234.

loyalties for the most part, serving the state in a more or less unmediated way in a purely military hierarchy of power. In the context of the sixth century or the later fifth century, soldiers' rebellions against authority were almost entirely connected with conditions of service—late pay, bad supplies, inadequate compensation for hardship, overzealous officers, and so on. Virtually none of the military unrest which can be located at this time can be connected with any sort of "political/ideological" consciousness or desire actively to intervene in imperial or provincial politics in order to effect some sort of change. Whether soldiers were led and exploited by their officers, or whether they acted on their own initiative (there are many examples of the latter), their grievances were on the whole not connected to any ideological context, but rather with their economic situation and their conditions of service and remuneration.[105] In this period, still, "politics" remained a predominantly metropolitan or urban phenomenon, in which soldiers were only marginally implicated as an independent element, if at all.[106]

Of course, there were groups of soldiers, notably private or state-supported *bucellarii*, who do not fit into this pattern, especially in the second half of the sixth century when, as evidence from Egyptian papyri suggests, the state actively encouraged members of the senatorial landed elite to hire private soldiers in order to maintain local peace and security, especially—as we might predict—where the collection of revenues was concerned. In return, the landlords received certain state benefits, and the soldiers themselves received official recognition as soldiers of the imperial forces, not merely hirelings.[107]

But on the whole and in spite of the manifest inefficiencies of state control, state

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[105]These conclusions are clearly supported by Kaegi's analysis of military unrest in the 5th and 6th centuries (*Byzantine Military Unrest,* 14ff), who shows in particular that it was a combination of maladministration, irregular pay, poor conditions of service, and bad treatment at the hands of corrupt, arrogant, or incompetent officers which stimulated unrest and mutiny. See esp. ibid., 64–153. For the 6th-century situation, see also Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 677f, 1035–37; and see my comments in "Ideology and Social Change in the Seventh Century: Military Discontent as a Barometer," *Klio* 68 (1986), 139–90, at 141f.

This is not to say, of course, that soldiers were not "constitutionally" inscribed in the formal structures of the expression of imperial power—their "traditional" role in respect of imperial accessions, along with the senate and people, was generally recognized: see the remarks of H.-G. Beck, "Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel: Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte," SBMünch (1966), Heft 6, 1–75, repr. in idem, *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz* (London, 1972), XII, 4–12; and O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (Jena, 1938), 251; in general, see W. Enßlin, "Zur Torqueskrönung und Schilderhebung bei der Kaiserwahl," *Klio* 35 (1942), 268–98; J. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart, 1939/44), esp. 7ff; A. Alföldi, *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt, 1970), 161–86. The centrality of the military in this respect was reduced over the 5th and 6th centuries, of course—see H.-G. Beck, "Res publica Romana. Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner," SBMünch (1970), Heft 2, repr. in *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild,* ed. H. Hunger (Darmstadt, 1975), 379–414, see 28ff; Ai. Christophilopoulou, "Ekloge, anagoreusis kai stepsis tou byzantinou autokratoros," *Pragmateiai tes Akademias Athenon* 22.2 (1956), t. 7, see 15–37 (and see the review by J. Karayannopoulos, in *BZ* 50 [1957], 467–74). For a survey of research on late Roman/early Byzantine political theory and the relationship between ideological constructs and normative practice, see Chr. Gizewski, *Zur Normativität und Struktur der Verfassungsverhältnisse in der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit* (= MünchBeitr 71) (Munich, 1988), 1–35.

[106]For a detailed analysis of late Roman political opposition which follows this line of reasoning, see Gizewski, *Zur Normativität,* esp. 185–210, see 206ff.

[107]See J. Gascou, "L'Institution des Bucellaires," *BIFAO* 76 (1976), 143–56; idem, "Les grands domaines, la cité et l'état en Égypte byzantine (Recherches d'histoire agraire, fiscale et administrative)," *TM* 9 (1985), 1–89. On the *bucellarii* in the imperial armies, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 101f and notes.

control of a fairly direct sort existed, and the soldiers, with rare exception, acted within the parameters of the imperial system.

This changes by the later seventh century. Suddenly we find soldiers and their leaders actively involved in challenging and overthrowing emperors on what can only be called an almost regular basis, at least for a while. What I have suggested was happening is complex, and I wish only to outline the basics of a very ramified argument here.

Two points can be made. First, an examination of the relevant evidence suggests that grievances over conditions of service, pay, supplies, officers' treatment of the men, and so on, were no longer at the root of such trouble. On the contrary, whether involving officers in a leading role or not, soldiers now took part in what we can reasonably call "imperial" politics, voicing their own particular points of view.[108] The key issues seem to have been fundamental questions about the nature of the state they lived in; the relationship between God, human society, and the individual; and the activities or abilities or Orthodoxy of particular rulers.[109]

This evolution took place in the context of a gradual change in ordinary perceptions of the relationship between the emperor and God and more especially about the source of imperial authority, on the one hand, and the location of sources of intercession, on the other, a change which occurred in the 550s or 560s on into the second half of the seventh century. In other words, there is a series of very complex, interlocking elements here, all of which need to be brought together to understand what made it possible for people, and specifically for soldiers, to think as they did, and act as they did, in the second half of the seventh century.[110]

Another fundamental change apparent by the second half of the seventh century, and which is an important element in the whole puzzle, is a loosening of what I have suggested was the fairly direct relationship between the state and its armies. The sources are difficult to interpret and very heterogeneous, but it seems clear that from this time and through the eighth century, with a specific exception, the regular field armies of the empire—now withdrawn into the regions which supported them after the Arab victories of the late 630s, and referred to as themes or *themata*—became increasingly ideologically and psychologically distanced from the center. While we cannot date many of the developments which occurred exactly, a number of points characterize the situation of soldiers and armies in the period from the 650s and 660s, although I would stress that the process is an evolving one.

First, central authority over recruitment or conscription of soldiers is loosened. This does not mean that the center retained no power, since a supervisory system of registers was maintained, and regular returns must have been made about the status of the ar-

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[108] I have discussed the evidence for what follows at length in "Ideology and Social Change," esp. 178ff, and will therefore forgo a detailed analysis here. See also Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 355–75.

[109] See "Ideology and Social Change," 180–88.

[110] Apart from the discussion at Haldon, "Ideology and Social Change," 161–70, see also Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35; eadem, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City finds its Symbol," *JTS* 29 (1978), 79–108, both reprinted in *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (London, 1981), parts XVIII and XVI, respectively; J. Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byzantium and the West in the Early Middle Ages," *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976), 97–119, repr. in *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), 259–81.

mies in each district to Constantinople (although we only have evidence for how this worked from the later eighth and early ninth century, when a series of reforms or rationalizations were carried out). But the result was, as we have already seen, that recruitment became highly localized.

Second, and in the process, soldiers become part of local society, again something apparent from the preceding discussion of the thematic structure.

Third, the organization of military matters at the tactical level—the *bandon* or basic unit (of anything from fifty to three or four hundred soldiers—again, the sources are both contradictory and imprecise)—was highly localized also. Since soldiers recruited from particular localities served in the same units—as far as we can tell (and again later evidence, which can, I believe, reliably be used retrospectively, shows how this worked)—they tended to share both similar loyalties and similar views or a similar understanding or "common sense" of how their world worked—or should work.[111]

[111] The evidence for this localization is indirect, but hardly to be doubted. First, we possess the cumulative references for recruitment on a local basis, and the role of the local community as a fiscal unit in this respect, material referred to already. Second, we know from 10th-century sources that the recruitment and maintenance of ordinary soldiers was organized through *tourmai*, or "divisions," in turn subdivided into *banda*, referred to from the administrative point of view as *topoteresiai*, which were distinct geographic entities consisting of a group of localities made up in turn of a group of fiscal districts. The *drouggos* (loosely rendered as "brigade") does not appear to have possessed any geographical identity, and referred to a tactical-organizational body only (note that it was a *chiliarchos*, the equivalent, but Greek, term for a *drouggarios*, who was in charge of the mustering party and *adnoumion* to which the poor soldier Mousoulios in the Life of Philaretos was ordered to report). These officers were probably attached to the permanent staff of the theme *strategos*. See note 36 above; and in general *De adm. imp.* 50.91–110; commentary, 189; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 80f; Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, 257–58. W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine State Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (East European Monographs, 121. Byz. series 2) (New York, 1982), 73ff, 80f; "Remarks on the Work of Al-Jarmi on Byzantium," *BSl* 44 (1983), 205–12; and *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842* (Stanford, 1988), 317f, has suggested that the *bandon* was an administrative introduction of the reign of Theophilus. While I believe he is right to argue for some important changes during this period, this particular suggestion is flawed. In the first place, there is actually no evidence for the *territorial* existence of *drouggoi* in any period, whether before or after the supposed reforms of Theophilus. On the other hand, *banda* had always existed, certainly from the later 6th century, as the evidence of the *Strategikon* of Maurice and several other texts of the later 6th and first half of the 7th century prove—cf., for example, V. Beševliev, *Spätgriechische und spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien* (= BBA, 30) (Berlin, 1964), 60, no. 89, for a 6th-century inscription from Odessos (Varna), on a tombstone of a certain Marcellus, a dekarch in the *bandon* of the *comes* Dudus based in the fortlet of Rouni. See W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Notes on Hagiographic Sources for Some Institutional Changes and Continuities in the Early Seventh Century," *Byzantina* 7 (1975), 58–70; Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 108ff, and esp. note 103. There is no doubt that they were commanded by officers with the title of *comes* (*komes*); and since they are found in all army units from the early 9th century on, there is no reason to doubt that they existed also during the later 7th and 8th centuries. The collection of Zacos and Veglery contains a number of seals of *komites* for the period from the mid-7th to the early 9th century, for example, and it is likely that many of them belonged to provincial officers of this type (*Byzantine Lead Seals*, nos. 666, 916, 3021, 3026, 3107, 1453A, 1533, 1678A, 1679, 1802, 1845, 2004, 2094, 2181, 2234, 2289A, 2419, 2468, 2469, 2480, 2480A, 2483). Unfortunately, however, this sigillographic evidence hardly helps. There are numerous seals of both *komites* and *drouggarioi* of the 7th to 9th centuries, but none bear any regional or geographical location, except for those associated with specific fiscal or command functions, all in turn associated with coastal regions or ports (e.g., the *komites* of Abydos or Hierou—see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, nos. 640, 1769, 1803, etc.). With the exception of such functionally specific commands, no seals of either *drouggarioi* or of *komites* associated with inland places are known, either for the former from the 7th and 8th centuries, or for the latter from the later 9th or 10th century. The *tagmata* of Constantine V were organized in *banda* under *komites* (although of course these officers had no territorial jurisdiction) but, more importantly, the *Vigla* or *arithmos* established as a *tagma* by Irene seems to have been originally an ordinary pro-

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Fourth, the decline in the importance of provincial towns or urban centers meant that they no longer fulfilled the role of cultural centers and administrative and ideological intermediaries between province and center, a shift in their function which begins already in the fifth century and becomes very clear by the end of the sixth century (the so-called urban revival of the fifth century which took place in certain parts of the empire does not alter this, since the structural position of the urban landed elites and of the urban *curiales* was barely affected).[112] The result for provincial society was that only the army remained as a site, metaphorically speaking, on which large numbers of people regularly came together, where views and fears and anxieties could be expressed or formed in a public context. In consequence the army, in effect, replaces the urban populace of the empire as the voice of opposition or discontent—and it is worth pointing out that the decline in the independent political activities of Blue and Green factions in the cities of the East (as far as we know about their activities outside Constantinople at all), a purely urban phenomenon and hitherto the most obvious locus of popular views and discontent or approbation (whatever their structural or formal properties), more or less coincides with the decline in the functional importance of cities in East Roman culture and government, and the increasingly vocal appearance of soldiers in politics.[113]

All these factors lie behind the activities of soldiers in the later seventh and early eighth century, for what we see is, I would argue, the representation by soldiers from the provinces of what I will for the moment call "popular" attitudes and understanding of a rapidly changing world, which was often difficult to comprehend, or make sense of, in the terms of the traditional sets of values of East Roman cultural norms and expectations.

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vincial field unit, and it too was organized into *banda* with *komites* in charge (see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 236–45). Given the nature of the settlement of soldiers across the areas they defended, and granted that the smallest basic tactical unit was the *bandon*, under its *komes*, is it not inherently likely that it had in fact always been the *komites*, and not the *drouggarioi*, who commanded a geographically identifiable region, that across which the soldiers of their own particular *bandon* were recruited? I do not believe the evidence allows us to say with any certainty either way. But what is perhaps interesting in this respect is the appearance of *drouggarokomites* or *drouggarioi kai komites*, clearly in command of *banda*, in 10th-century sources referring both to their own time and the middle and later 9th century. This might suggest the real nature of the changes which took place in the earlier part of the 9th century, when we may guess that the importance of location and territory in respect of recruiting and mustering thematic soldiers eventually resulted in the position of *drouggarios* being reduced in value, that of *komes* being regarded as of equivalent rank. See Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, 256–58.

[112] See Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* esp. 99–124 on this question; also Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens,* for a detailed analysis of the textual and archaeological evidence; also H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "The Demise of the Ancient City in the Eastern Roman Empire," *Échos du Monde Classique/Classical Views* 32, n.s. 7 (1988), 365–401.

[113] For the role of soldiers and the armies in this context, see Haldon, "Ideology and Social Change," 172, 187ff. On the factions, see Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority," esp. 6–15; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Constantinople* (Oxford, 1976). For a succinct analysis of earlier views, see F. Winkelmann, "Zur politischen Rolle der Bevölkerung Konstantinopels in der nachjustinianischen Zeit bis zum Beginn des Bilderstreits," in *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz: Probleme der Herausbildung des Feudalismus,* ed. H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann (= BBA 47) (Berlin, 1976), 101–19, who stresses the continued importance of the Blue and Green factions in Constantinople during the 7th century; also H.-G. Beck, "Konstantinopel: Zur Sozialgeschichte einer frühmittelalterlichen Hauptstadt," *BZ* 58 (1965), 11–45, esp. 35–41. Even in Constantinople, as Alan Cameron shows, the continued "political" activity of these organizations is constrained by an increasingly circumscribing imperial ceremonial function.

What I have been describing, therefore, represents a fundamental change in the role of one aspect of East Roman or Byzantine society, and of the state apparatuses, in the period from the sixth to the eighth century. The army becomes political in a way that it really had not before, in spite of the fact that, as we know, there was in "constitutional" terms always a military element in, for example, the acclamation or choice of a new emperor, so that "politics" in the very broadest sense was not new for soldiers. But I do not think that alters the basic case I have tried to outline.

During the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, soldiers and the army continue to evolve, and it is important to emphasize that their evolution is only one aspect of the evolution of the state and its apparatuses, part of the social and cultural evolution of Byzantine society in the larger sense. This becomes particularly obvious when we refer, albeit very briefly, to two themes: first, the role of soldiers in the iconoclastic controversy; and second, the relationship between soldiers and the provincial armies in particular and the increasing power and importance of the new class of provincial and Constantinopolitan magnates who, growing out of the state-promoted meritocratic elite of the later seventh and early eighth century, become the aristocracy of the middle and later Byzantine periods.

There is no doubt that the politics of soldiers during the period of iconoclast rule are highly provincialized, that is to say, rebellions, civil wars, and similar disturbances, while often led by political men aiming at absolute (imperial) power, have very clearly localized roots, in respect of the sources of discontent, the nature of the opposition and competitive loyalties of one theme versus another, and so on. This is something which I think Kaegi's work on the subject, and on military unrest in general, brings out quite clearly.[114] The creation of the *tagmata* by Constantine V, and the evolution of a "guards" army at Constantinople through the establishment by successive emperors of their own elite corps, marks a radical shift in the center of political attention in the army from the provinces to Constantinople. It also marks an increasing polarization between center and province, and the intentional involvement of military units by emperors in both ideological and power struggles—Constantine V, Leo IV, Constantine VI and Irene, Nicephorus I, Michael I, Leo V, Michael II, Theophilus all bring into the Constantinopolitan political arena their own military formations, whether they create them from scratch or promote loyal provincial units to metropolitan duties and rewards.[115] Thus with the second half of the eighth century there takes place what I would characterize as an explicit politicization of the army from above (in contrast to the largely unpremeditated response of soldiers in the preceding period to issues which they saw as of concern to them), on the one hand, accompanied by the creation of a two-tier army: *tagmata* as contrasted with *themata*.[116]

These changes cannot be divorced from what is happening in Byzantine society in

[114]See in particular W. E. Kaegi, "The Byzantine Armies and Iconoclasm," *BSl* 22 (1966), 48–70; idem, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 209–43, esp. 232ff, 270ff.

[115]See Haldon, *Praetorians*, esp. 245–56.

[116]This is clearest where the *tagmata* and similar units are concerned, but, as Kaegi has also demonstrated, it applies to the provincial armies too. See Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 244ff, 254–69; and note P. Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI: Die Legitimation einer fremden und der Versuch einer eigenen Herrschaft* (Munich, 1978), 72ff, for example, who comments on the way in which Leo IV's introduction of certain administrative changes is to be connected with the political context of securing his own position and that of his son and successor Constantine VI.

general, of course. They represent part of the relationship between the state and its rulers, on the one hand, and the new elite which the state created during the later seventh and early eighth century, referred to above.[117] They reflect also the economic recovery and the political stabilization of the empire (one of the results, in part at least, of the policies of the iconoclastic emperors and the forces which lay behind those policies). They represent further the consequent emergence of new sets of power relationships, both within the elite, between Constantinople and the provinces, and in particular for our concerns, between the provincial soldiery and their modes of recruitment, on the one hand, and on the other the elite of magnates and imperial office- and title-holders, in Asia Minor especially; and they are, at a slightly later date, tied in closely with the expansionist politics of the second half of the ninth century and after.[118]

With the tenth and eleventh centuries a number of developments regarding the political role or function of the army are of particular significance. On the one hand, we have the increasingly high profile of the so-called military clans in Anatolia, especially with respect to their local power which, as far as the sources seem to suggest, represents extensive networks of clientage and patronage, especially between the middling- and higher-status provincial elites, and between the soldiers and their leaders who were drawn from these elites. The evidence of the novels of Romanus I and Constantine VII suggests a growing "private" aspect to the thematic armies, dependent as they appear to have been socially and economically on the magnate landlords of their provinces. Even regions which traditionally appear to have been dominated by small-scale landed property and relatively dispersed estates such as the Thrakesion district in western Anatolia appear increasingly to have come under the sway of big landlords. References to soldiers being permitted to function in a private capacity suggest the nature of the changes.[119]

On the other hand, the increasingly significant contrast between the traditional thematic militia soldiery, and the ever more numerous units raised on a "tagmatic" basis,

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[117]See note 75 above. For general reflections on the changes which occurred over this period, see the excellent study on the political and social position of the elite of the 10th through 12th centuries of Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 207–37, 249ff, 303ff, 324–36; M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025–1204: A Political History* (London, 1984), 2ff. Note also Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 145ff, and esp. A. Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav gospodstvujuščego klassa v Vizantii XI-XII vv.* (Moscow, 1974).

[118]On the political and economic recovery of the state from the late 8th century onward, see most recently Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival*, with the critical responses of Lilie (*BSl*, 48 [1987], 49–55) and myself (in *International History Review*, 11.2 [May 1989], 313–19).

[119]In general see R. Morris, "The Powerful and the Poor in Tenth-Century Byzantium: Law and Reality," *Past and Present* 73 (Nov., 1976), 3–27. For an example of the relationships of dependence which might develop between local officer-magnates and the soldiers of their theme, see Zepos, *Jus* I, 225–26 (and Lemerle's commentary, *Agrarian History*, 122f), where soldiers are granted exemptions from military service in return for gifts. Note also Leo, *Takt.*, 8, 26, concerning the secondment of theme soldiers to the personal service of higher officers; and Dagron's comment, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, 282. For the Thrakesion district, see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 159 with notes 97, 98, and literature; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 145–76; Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 122f; N. Svoronos, "Société et organisation intérieure dans l'empire byzantin au XIᵉ siècle: Les principaux problèmes," in *Études sur l'organisation intérieure, la société et l'économie de l'empire byzantin* (London, 1973), part IX, 1–17, see 7 (originally published in *Proceedings of the 13th International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Main Papers* XII [Oxford, 1966], 371–89); Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 235–36 (suggesting that Hendy, *Studies*, 103–6 was wrong to assume that there were no large estates in this region in the 10th century; but see Hendy, *Studies*, 135f, for an actually less simplistic position). For the traditional view, see Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte*, 225ff.

recruited either permanently or for the duration of a specific campaign, and remunerated much more generously than the theme soldiers, marks the process of Byzantine reconquests in the East and in the North. While thematic forces, or rather their elite elements, continue to play a role, the lead in campaigns is now taken by brigades of centrally administered and controlled mercenary or professional troops—initially the various *tagmata* based in or around Constantinople, in turn extended by the establishment of greater numbers of tagmatic *banda* in the provinces, under their own commanders. In addition, the spearhead forces which led the reconquests in northern Syria and Jazira were mostly, as far as we can see, based around such mercenary forces, which included also large numbers of "ethnic" troops such as Turks and especially Armenians.[120]

At the same time, we must remark on a contradiction within the policies of successive emperors, especially those of Nicephorus II. There can be little doubt that the state, as represented in the legislation of Constantine VII, tried to maintain the thematic forces, recruited on the basis of the *strateia,* as an effective and fundamental element in the imperial armies. Commutation of the *strateia,* or rather its partial fiscalization, existed, but personal service was still usual. In contrast, all the evidence suggests that the legislation of Nicephorus II, as well as that of Basil II, while certainly designed to protect the *fiscal* base of the *strateia,* had in practice the effect of further generalizing the fiscalization of military service among stratiotic households. Whether it served at the same time to further deepen the gulf between those households registered as military (*stratiotikos*) and those defined as "civilian" (*politikos*), by increasing dramatically the amount of land which was thenceforth inalienably connected with military service, as suggested by Dagron, is unclear. But it must have dramatically increased the total land nominally subject to the *strateia* in one form or another. More significantly, the traditional system involved usually only a *partial* call up of those listed on the registers, as we have seen. A fully fiscalized *strateia* would make it possible for the state both to regularize and to maximize the extraction of resources drawn from this category of land, and thus enhance its revenue. The evidence from the tenth- and eleventh-century sources suggests that the state always kept its options open in this respect—it was the political and fiscal, as well as the military context of a given campaign which determined whether the fiscal option or that of personal service, or some combination of the two, was taken up.[121] Zonaras' account of Nicephorus' reform of the *strateia,* by which each group of holders was transferred from one set of obligations to a more onerous one, and by

[120]There had probably been a constant difference in character, at least from the 8th century, between the troops in the border *themata* and those of the interior—see J. F. Haldon and H. Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands," *ZRVI* 19 (1980), 79–116, at 85; and esp. Dagron's discussion of the 10th-century situation in *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 245f. But the differences which evolved during the later 9th and esp. the 10th century reflect in addition a fundamental shift in imperial strategy. See in particular Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 27–36, 55ff, 82ff, 89–90; also N. Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'Empire byzantin au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle (1025–1118)," *TM* 6 (1976), 125–52, see 143ff. For the continued role played by the traditional thematic forces well into the 11th century, see the references in note 149 below.

[121]For example, the lack of regular thematic *adnoumia,* the continued existence of thematic forces well into the 11th century, and the possibility of transferring a fiscal *strateia* back into active service. See the references in notes 149, 146, and the anonymous 10th-century treatise on *Campaign Organisation and Tactics,* ed. Dennis, cap. 29 (320–322) for the *adnoumia.*

which the minimum amount of inalienable stratiotic land (for those who possessed it) was increased from a value of 4 to a value of 12 pounds of gold, makes it quite clear that what the emperor had in mind (certainly in the case of holders of naval *strateiai* transferred to infantry obligations, for example) was the raising of cash or materials, as much as manpower, with which hired troops—mercenary, professional soldiers—could be equipped. The result seems to have been—especially in respect of the report of Ibn Hawkal already referred to—on the one hand the entrenching of a fiscal distinction between military and nonmilitary households, the better to protect or even broaden the fiscal base upon which the *strateia* as a state obligation could be extracted; and on the other, a decline in state dependence on personal service from thematic holders of *strateiai*, accompanied by a considerable increase in general state demands for cash and resources—livestock, materials—imposed upon that part of the nonstratiotic population of the empire not otherwise exempt from such prestations.[122]

Here, however, the picture becomes rather more complicated, for there are a number of interlinking phenomena underlying and affecting these developments. To begin with we need to take into consideration the struggle between those factions which dominated the central power at given moments (factions represented by coalitions around various powerful figures at court in a constant struggle for influence, together with those families or fractions of families with vested interests in the capital and the provinces) and other factions, notably the leading provincial magnate clans not represented in a given dominant court power elite. Such oppositions can be detected in the rivalries between the Phokas and Skleros clans, for example, and also between them and the clique focused around the young Basil II during the later tenth century. But it is important to stress that these families had as yet no developed political unity of purpose— they were out for their own interests, even if they often coincided structurally, in respect of control over the state apparatus, with the interests of the whole social-economic class which they represented.[123]

It is apparent in the light of these considerations that we have to interpret the ways in which the reconquests took place, and more particularly the ways in which the state

[122] For Nicephorus' novel expanding the fiscal base of the *strateia*, see Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 22, 255–256 (Dölger, *Regesten,* no. 721). There are a number of textual problems with this novel, however, and it may be that substantial revisions in our interpretation of its content will be needed. T. Kolias (Ioannina) is preparing a study, to appear in the near future. See Zonaras, III, 505.16–506.10 for his account of Nicephorus' reforms, and the commentary of Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 16ff; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription,* 60–62. For Ibn Hawkal, see note 94 above. For the general tendency to fiscalize state corvées and services which can be detected in the sources from the later 10th century (although commutation of the *strateia* is the earliest to evolve), see A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200* (Cambridge, 1989), 109ff. For Dagron's comments, see *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 280–82. Basil II's novel of 996 (Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 29 [262–272]; Dölger, *Regesten,* 783) again goes to great lengths to defend the fiscal base and independence of lands subject to a *strateia*, but pays no attention to the actual manpower formerly derived from such properties.

[123] See the excellent survey by Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations,* which brings out the internal splits and factional interests which dominated the elite, and stresses once again that the "military" and "civil" parties of the later 10th and 11th centuries were by no means monolithic groups (a view argued by Ostrogorsky, for example, and which in fact reflects the Byzantines' own perceptions of the situation), but rather a congeries of relatively fluid groupings concentrated on the careers or short-term interests of individual Constantinopolitan or provincial figures and their followings. On the role of such factions and personal retinues, see ibid., 191–98, 287ff, and note also Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav,* 132ff.

administered the conquered districts or cities, very carefully. In particular, the establishment of large numbers of small units of military administration, while it certainly reflects the bite-by-bite nature of the Byzantine absorption of new territories, entailing as it did the setting up of new administrative and fiscal units to cope with each new territory gained, reflected also the reluctance of the central administration to hand over large territories to magnate domination and exploitation. Conquered districts were often absorbed directly as imperial *episkepseis*, autonomous fiscal units subject directly to the fisc. The imperial re-organization of the administration of the newly conquered Bulgarian lands between 998 and 1018, the exclusion from positions of authority there of Anatolian magnates from the Phokas-Maleinos faction, the increasing trend toward centralization of fiscal and military matters at Constantinople in the time of Basil II and after, and the growing divergence between the military and civil circumscriptions, all represent the same fear and the same policy. These developments also reflect, of course, the natural evolution of the different organs of state administration and control—fiscal, civil, and military—as the conditions generated by the reconquests and the conflict of interests already pointed to worked themselves out. By the same token, the centralization of control over public fiscal lands in the department of the *epi ton oikeiakon*, and the decline of the general *logothesion*, reflect the emperors' efforts, especially Basil II, to maximize state control over its resources and to minimize thereby the danger of alienation of such resources to other interests.[124]

We are thus confronted with several reciprocally influencing elements: conflict between different factions at the center over resource control and allocation; structural administrative changes which reflect both this struggle and the process of reconquest and its administrative demands; the consequent effects upon the traditional or inherited system of provincial civil and military administration; and, for our purposes especially, the differentiated roles of the different types of soldier in the political structure of the state and its various conflicting social-economic interest groups.

The results of these developments, which can be observed from the early tenth century on, can be summarized as follows.

First, the more visible evolution of a personalized relationship of loyalties and patronage between magnate leaders and their soldiers, especially those from the provinces where the former had landed property. Second, the centralization in respect of the state's control or authority over, and the considerable increase in the number of, the units which were established to defend the interests of the central power against those of the provinces, the *tagmata*. Third, the increased recruitment by the state of mercenary soldiers who were outside the relationships of provincial or thematic patronage, and therefore loyal to their paymasters. In this respect, Basil II's recruitment of the Varangians is qualitatively of a very different order, and responds to a quite different situation and context, from the recruitment by earlier emperors from the later eighth

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[124]See in particular Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance*, 344ff, 354–63; idem, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin," 135–41, 148ff; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 46–67, 82–88; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 336, 387f; Svoronos, "Société et organisation intérieure," 10. The way in which the central authority retained control through directly absorbing new territories into fiscal units or by otherwise excluding the old Anatolian elite is also reflected in the figures for the origins and basis of wealth of members of the dominant elite in the 11th and 12th centuries established by Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav*, 195f, 204f, and accompanying tables.

century onward (right up to the reign of John Tzimiskes) of their own units, whether indigenous or foreign. The use of Norman and Petcheneg troops in the middle and later eleventh century, which reflects likewise the degrading of the traditional thematic forces, and at the same time the weakening of some elements of the provincial elite, must be seen in this context, that is to say, of the conflicting interests and antagonistic politics of those factions in the power elite which dominated the center, and those in the provinces. In fact, it is important to stress that, in spite of the increasing irrelevance of the thematic militias, and the increased "tagmatization" of the armies, provincially re-cruited *tagmata* tended to retain or reproduce similar local identities and solidarities to those which are known to have existed within and between the older *themata*. Local networks of patronage continued to operate, and local loyalties survived, in such units. The state's policy proved, in the end, to provide only a temporary respite from the provincialized politics and vested interests against which it was originally directed.[125]

To summarize, from the "professional" type armies of the later Roman Empire in the sixth century, which played only a very limited role in state politics, we can observe two stages of a progressive politicization of armies and soldiers: during the seventh and eighth centuries, as soldiers recruited locally identified with, and acted on behalf of, local loyalties, local ideological perspectives, and political or economic concerns; and during the later eighth and ninth centuries onward, as the opposition between the cen-tral tagmatic forces and the provincial thematic forces evolves. At the same time, the latter stage is accompanied by the efforts of the central establishment to prevent the process of alienation of provincial military resources, concurrent with the demands of the offensive warfare of the tenth century and the rise of a provincial elite. An increased dependency on both indigenous and foreign, professional or full-time, forces was a logical concomitant, a dependency which had the effect of centralizing military power and reinforcing, for a while, the authority and policies of the rulers.

The result was, in its turn, a two-fold polarization within the military establishment of the empire, which accurately reflected the internal tensions and dynamic of Byzan-tine state and society over the period in question: on the one hand, between the tradi-tional provincial or thematic armies under their local officers and leaders, the latter drawn from different and often competing families of the magnate class, and the tag-matic or centrally controlled forces, some under provincial magnate authority, others still based at the capital, all again under officers drawn from this internally differen-tiated social and political elite. On the other hand there was a contradiction between the interest of the dominant elite as a social group, whatever its internal divisions may have been, and the interests of the "state," which is to say the faction dominating the center and imperial politics at any given moment. Over the period from the tenth century up to the seizure of power by Alexios I in 1081, different families and factions of the mag-nate elite, whether dependent upon indigenous, provincial *tagmata* or upon imperial positions, generally competed between themselves and with the center for dominance, with now one, now another family or group of families coming to the fore. But a direct result of the Seljuk victory in 1071, which affected the older military elite of the regions

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[125] For the differentiation within the power elite and their reliance on different types of military force and retinue, see esp. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 321ff; Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav*, 132ff. For local loy-alties, see again Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 305f.

in question most immediately, altered this balance in favor of those elements with access to state power and control over mercenary forces (as well as their own power bases). The victory of Alexius I and the political order he evolved is directly connected with these military and administrative considerations. In this respect, the army, both as an important and central institution of state and within society, represents an extremely valuable focus for research into the pattern and form of Byzantine social and political history.

## VIII. SOLDIERS AND STATUS

It can readily be seen from this survey that the status of soldiers must have varied both across time, in society as a whole, and in the attitudes of people from different areas or sections of society. Throughout the period from the sixth to the later ninth and early tenth centuries, the evidence suggests, indirect though it often is, and uncertain though the interpretation of certain legal texts might be, that soldiers had a relatively privileged position in comparison with the ordinary inhabitants of towns or countryside and, perhaps more importantly, they constituted a more or less clearly identifiable group institutionally. Of course, there were considerable differences in economic status and situation between and among soldiers. Nevertheless, the mostly indigenous Byzantine armies were relatively homogeneous, at least from the point of view of their juridical status, and this can be ascribed in large part, I suggest, to the fact that the armies were very much rooted in local society, recruited regionally from peasant communities and officered, as far as the evidence suggests, by local men.[126] Foreign mercenary soldiers were assimilated usually into Byzantine-led units, even where they constituted distinct groups within such units—the Chazars and Pharganoi in the *Hetaireia,* for example. And non-Byzantine soldiers recruited from foreign refugee settlers, such as the Persians under Theophilus or the bedouin Banu Habib under Constantine VII, were also assimilated by being settled and subjected to the same conditions of fiscal and civil administration—as far as we can tell—as native Byzantine populations.[127]

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[126] For some examples from the 9th and early 10th centuries, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 331 and note 1021.

[127] On economic differentiation, see the discussion in section V above. For the *Hetaireia*, see P. Karlin-Hayter, "L'Hétériarque: L'évolution de son rôle du *De Ceremoniis* au *Traité des Offices*," *JÖB* 23 (1974), 101–43; Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance*, 327f; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 32–33. On the recruitment and assimilation of non-Byzantine soldiers—whether in origin prisoners of war or refugees—see the passage at *De cer.*, 694ff, referring to the provisions under which "Saracen" prisoners of war were to be settled within the empire and given lands which might then support them, and upon which a *strateia* might be imposed, or on the basis of which soldiers might otherwise be recruited. See Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 133f, for a commentary (although it should be stressed that the passage says nothing about military service *in return* for being granted lands or fiscal exemptions for a limited period). For the Banu Habib, see A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* II: *Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne (Les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) (867–959),* éd. fr. H. Grégoire, M. Canard (CBHByz 2) (Bruxelles, 1968), 2, 333, 419–20; on the "Persians" see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival,* 292ff, 313–15; on both, Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus,* 82–85. Not all "mercenary" soldiers and their leaders were easily absorbed, of course. One of the best-known examples is that of the Armenian noble Tatzates, who attained the position of *strategos* of the Boukellarion theme, yet deserted to the Arabs (having abandoned the Muslim side in the first place) with his retinue in 782. See Theophanes, 456; Ghevond (*Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des Arabes en Arménie,* trans. G. Chahnazarian [Paris, 1856]), 152ff. And the examples of the Slavs and their leaders who changed sides in 665 (Theophanes, 348) or the

This formal homogeneity was further reinforced by the fact that the property of soldiers acquired through their military service continued to be protected by a special military *peculium*. In addition, all property belonging to soldiers (as well as to certain other categories of state official) was protected by state law under the principle *in integrum restitutio*, by which the state undertook to make good on property lost or damaged during an owner's absence on public service. To a certain extent, it is this principle which underlies the policy of restitution enshrined in the tenth-century legislation dealing with soldiers' lands. The active troops received donatives and a share of booty (in theory, at least, and when the state could afford it) and they were regarded as occupying a special position by those who expressed views on the political ideology and the fundamental theological raison d'être of the empire. Along with the Church and the peasantry, the soldiers held a special position: "the army is to the state as the head is to the body; neglect it, and the state is in danger," was how Constantine VII expressed this role. In his *Tactika*, Leo VI described peasants and soldiers as the two pillars upon which the polity was founded.[128] The emperors saw themselves symbolically as the father of their soldiers, the soldiers' wives as their daughters-in-law; some emperors referred to the soldiers as their own *systratiotai*, or comrades-in-arms.[129] These represent both sets of practical attitudes as well as the somewhat more abstract ideas embodied in Christian political theory and inherited, ultimately, from the classical past. But there were also day-to-day practical advantages to being a soldier. These lay especially in the area of fiscal privileges, for soldiers and their immediate family (and hence any property directly owned or held and exploited by them) were always exempted from extraordinary

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Armenians settled in Cappadocia under Constantine V, who likewise abandoned the Byzantines (Theophanes, 430; see Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber*, 246, on Armenian desertions and the Byzantine reaction thereto) provide good examples of the potential dangers inherent in employing "outsiders." On the question of the assimilation of foreign soldiers to Byzantine social and legal norms, see below, note 147.

[128] On military *peculium, peculium castrense*, see notes 58, 59 above. For Constantine's comment, see Zepos, *Jus* I, 222, proem. (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 673); and Leo, *Takt.* 11, 11. Cf. the distinction made in the opening paragraph of a novel of Romanus I (Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 2 [201] a.934) between the subjects of the state and their taxes, on the one hand, and the military and civil duties required by the state on the other. Of course, the particular significance of this special right over certain types of property was diminished as the traditional *patria potestas* of Roman law was progressively weakened, a process which reached an important watershed in the *Ecloga* (see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 378 and note 8, for literature and brief discussion), although important elements of this form of the paternal authority remained in force until much later (see K. E. Zachariä von Lingenthal, *Geschichte des griechisch-römischen Rechts* [Berlin, 1892; repr. Aalen, 1955], 106ff). Nevertheless, it remained, in theory at least, an important privilege, as is clear from the 11th-century *Peira* 72.1 (258). Again, of course, the special position of soldiers has its origins in the early Principate and before and, whatever the forms in which it was reflected, represents quite directly the absolute dependency on the army of the state for its existence and, more particularly, the ruler for his security. See *Dig* IV, 6.45; the soldier was considered, when on active service, to be "rei publicae causa absens"—absent in the service of the state. For the principle of *in integrum restitutio*, see *CI*, II, 50.1; 3; 4; 6; 8; 52.1–7 ("De restitutione militum et eorum qui rei publicae causa afuerunt") and the following sections; and M. Kaser, *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht* (Munich, 1966), 330f.

[129] For example, Haldon, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, (C) 453–454, and commentary, 242–244. The motif was not new, even if its use represented a more rhetorical and ideological message than a genuine feeling of comradeship on the emperor's behalf: Trajan, as well as other military emperors, used a similar mode of addressing their soldiers. See *Dig* 29, 1.1, for the expression "my excellent and most loyal fellow soldiers."

fiscal burdens or corvées. Just as soldiers or similarly exempted categories of person in the late Roman period, they paid only the basic state demands, in this case the land tax or *synone* and the hearth tax, or *kapnikon*. Indeed, it must not be forgotten that the difference between "military households" and "civilian households" (*stratiotikoi oikoi, politikoi oikoi*) was not especially medieval: its origins lie in the standard and entirely normal late Roman distinction drawn between those groups who enjoyed specific immunities in respect of certain state demands and those who did not. Those owing service in respect of the post (*exkoussatoi tou dromou*), of provisioning military personnel (*prosodiarioi*), and those who worked in imperial armories were similarly immune from certain state corvées in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[130]

The privileges of military *peculium* and the principle of restitution of property impugned while absent on service gave soldiers a particular juridical status also, as we have seen. In addition to this soldiers, and their immediate dependants, had in theory (like all groups so defined for jurisdictional purposes as *collegia* or *koina*) the right to have cases tried by their own commanders for offenses relating to their duties. The privileges of prescription of forum, by which accused persons could refuse to appear before any court but their own even for criminal offenses, do not appear to have been retained. This seems to underlie the complaint of the author of the treatise on guerrilla strategy, for example, that soldiers' rights were being violated by civil officials.[131] The increasing power of the centrally appointed civilian officials at the expense, apparently, of the military establishment in the themes in the second half of the tenth century is clearly reflected in this treatise, as Dagron has stressed. The text makes clear (if perhaps exaggerated) reference to the oppression of soldiers by the civil authorities (over fiscal and other matters). A number of other texts, to some of which I have already referred, dating from the ninth century on, give the same impression.[132]

Of course, this was the formal situation, both as represented in legal codifications

[130] On fiscal privileges, see the texts cited at Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 54 note 94; 60 note 104; Dagron, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, 264ff, and the references in note 104 above. See Patlagean, "L'impôt payé par les soldats" for the late Roman origins of these special categories; and the note of Oikonomides et al. in *Actes d'Iviron*, p. 153. For the armorers, see note 44 above. There is no reason to think that the partially exempt status of such persons in the 10th century did not derive directly from their similar situation in the late Roman period: see, for example, *CI* XII, 40.4; XI, 10.1–6; XII, 40.4 for the *fabricenses* (and cf. *Bas.* LVII, 5.4; 8); although it is interesting to note that the earlier legislation sometimes expressly cancels the exemption when the imperial *comitatus* is present. Such reservations may explain the abuses of exempted status which occurred, both in the later Roman period and after. The *Taktika* of Leo VI (20, 71 [PG 107, 1032c]) notes that soldiers drafted for state *aggareiai* when other nonexempt subjects were not available were to be paid for their labor, suggesting that they may not always have been appropriately recompensed.

[131] Ed. Dagron-Mihäescu, xix, 6f. For detailed discussion of soldiers' privileges, and particularly the question of *praescriptio fori*, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 304–7, with notes 915–26; Dagron, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, 269–72.

[132] See note 70 above; and note also the letter 132 of Michael Psellos, asking for relief from the burden of a fiscalized *strateia* (or so the text would appear to suggest) for a registered man (*Michaelis Pselli Scripta minora*, ed. G. Kurtz and F. Drexl, 2 vols. (Milan, 1936–41), II, 154f. A case preserved in the early 11th-century *Peira* (66.27 [250]) records how a soldier was chased off his holding, which was on church land, at the instigation of a *kourator* of the Hagia Sophia, and eventually murdered. The official in question was brought to justice and compensation was awarded. But the case illustrates the sort of treatment the lowlier soldiers may have received at the hands of more powerful officials.

and imperial legislation, as well as in military treatises. In respect of soldiers' privileges, for example, it is highly likely—and there is a reasonable amount of indirect evidence for it—that certain categories of soldier in the provinces were as subject to victimization by imperial officials and by powerful landlords or other such persons as anyone else. On the other hand, just as in the late Roman period and before, for which the evidence is somewhat better, soldiers were probably able to bully civilians, either in their own communities when either on or off duty, or in the regions through which they passed when on campaign. There is not much evidence, admittedly, and what there is comes from exceptional or unusual circumstances (the violent behavior of soldiers in Constantinople during the reigns of Constantine V, Irene, Nicephorus I, and Michael I, for example, or that of Nicephorus II), but behind the biased and slanted reports of the historians, chroniclers, and hagiographers who recorded such events lies the reality of armed force, backed by legal privilege and state power, in a civilian context. Conflict over the question of billeting and provisioning, for example, must have continued to present the authorities with problems in the Byzantine period, just as they had in the preceding centuries, although there is virtually no evidence to speak of. Certainly, the presence of soldiers in either towns or countryside was usually felt to be oppressive by local populations, and tension and conflict between the two must have been endemic. And their privileged juridical status, quite apart from their exercise of armed force, must have given them de facto a considerable potential for getting their own way.[133] This may not always have been the case, but the circumstances where it did not apply were very specific, a point to which I will return below. In reality, therefore, the situation was much more complex than most of our texts directly admit, and there were many more subdivisions within the broad category of "soldiers" than historians have often seen. Consequently, it is to a degree rather artificial, and even misleading, to try to speak about the status of "soldiers" without further defining the object of our analysis.

As we have already seen, the term represents a whole range of different economic and functional strata. Social status obviously attaches to wealth, for example. Yet, while it seems that the better off among the thematic armies occupied a position of some import in their communities, membership of the *axiomatikoi*—those who possessed an imperial title—was just as significant in securing social recognition, and it is clear from the surviving documents that most *stratiotai* did not belong.[134] On the other hand, military function also played a role—the expensively armed heavy cavalry of the armies of Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiskes, which may have been partially composed of

[133] For the later 8th and early 9th century in Constantinople, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, 232f for sources; and for Nicephorus II, Leo Diac. (*Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae libri decem*, Bonn ed. [1828], 1–178), 63.18ff. While Leo represents the populace of Constantinople as the instigators of hostility between themselves and Nicephorus' Armenian soldiers, there is every chance that the latter were just as responsible, esp. in view of the favoritism the emperor showed toward the military. For conflicts over billeting and supplying soldiers in the late Roman period, see in general MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian*, 86ff; as well as Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 631f, with the comments of E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance 4e-7e siècles* (Paris, 1977), 279–81; and R. Rémondon, "Soldats de Byzance d'après un papyrus trouvé à Edfou," *Recherches de Papyrologie* 1 (1963), 62–65. For the Byzantine period, note the warning of Leo VI (*Takt.*, 9.1–3) to generals to forage in enemy territory, rather than rely upon the unwilling Byzantine rural populace, suggestive of a common source of conflict.

[134] It is significant that all those bearing imperial titles, whether civil or military, were expressly prohibited from purchasing land subject to a *strateia*: e.g., Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 5. 209; Nov. 8. 223.

wealthy theme soldiers supporting themselves, must also have included a considerable number of poorer recruits equipped by the state through requisition and subscription, through *syndosia* and through direct state support. Such men may well have been able to improve their social position in their own communities, where they had such, through their military service. As Dagron has also emphasized, the border garrisons and watchtowers were manned by local forces on a rotational basis, men of relatively humble status, some serving on the basis of a *strateia,* others on the basis of a salary paid by the military authorities, others perhaps as draftees to the *apelatai,* seconded to frontier watch duty while their holdings received fiscal *adoreia.*[135] Such men as these will have been socially far inferior to the wealthy heavy cavalrymen of the themes, or indeed the mercenaries paid by the state, whether raised from the provinces or hired from outside the empire; but as enlisted men they will all, in theory, have shared the same juridical status and privileges. By the same token, it may well be the case that differences in wealth and status within the army developed from the seventh and eighth centuries, as those in cavalry or heavy cavalry units differed from those in infantry units. But no source throws light on this period.

In some texts, soldiers are regarded as belonging to the wealthy and/or the oppressors of the rural smallholders: Theophanes, for example, contrasts the *strateuomenoi* with the *ptochoi* (although it should be noted that the former term may refer simply to all those in imperial service, i.e., holding a *strateia*); while the tenth-century chronicle known as Theophanes continuatus, describing the effects of the legislation of Constantine VII, lists soldiers alongside *strategoi, protonotarioi,* and *ippotai* (presumably to be identified with the ordinary or perhaps better-off cavalry soldiers), in contrast to the *penetes* or poor.[136] As we have seen, there existed a wealthier category of registered *stratiotai,* who could afford to provide their own provisions (and help those who were less fortunate than themselves). In much of the imperial legislation, on the other hand, ordinary soldiers are generally bracketed with other less well-off peasants, whose livelihood was threatened by the *dynatoi* and by natural calamities. It is difficult to know if this represents a tenth-century development in particular. But according to an undated novel of Constantine VII, drafted by Theodore Dekapolites, the general economic situation of "soldiers" had worsened in the immediately preceding years, that is, sometime before 959, the latest date for the issue of the document.[137] According to the same

[135] On *adoreia,* see note 78 above. Leo, *Takt.,* 4.1 refers to both groups. For the frontier and the *apelatai,* see Dagron-Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 227, note 29, 245ff. Their activities are perhaps most revealingly reflected in the fact that the term came also to refer on occasion to bandits, and was associated very closely with the marginal society of the borderlands, a society in which there was a substantial number of immigrants and newcomers (certainly in the 10th century) seeking to exploit the socially more "open" possibilities inherent in the insecurities of frontier existence. See in particular Dagron's comments, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 254–57, with literature. See also Lemerle, *Agrarian History,* 135 and note 1; Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 14.

[136] Theophanes, 404.9–10; Theoph. cont., 443 (in *Theophanes continuatus,* Bonn ed. [1825], 1–481). Note that Zonaras uses the term *ippotai* in a semitechnical sense to denote that category of *stratiotes* who held a *strateia* supporting, or partly supporting, a cavalry soldier, below the grade of heavy cavalry: Zonaras III, 506.7.

[137] Lemerle's novel E in his "dossier" (*Agrarian History,* 87): Zepos, *Jus* I, 222–26; on the dating, see Lemerle, *Agrarian History,* 85ff. The novel makes clear reference to the existence of several strata of peasant *stratiotai,* differentiated according to their economic position: ibid., 224, 225. A document of Iviron for 975

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emperor's sixth novel (of 947), in contrast, soldiers hold a relatively high position in the hierarchy of the rural community; and it is clear that, even though this position seemed generally affected by the encroachments of the *dynatoi* (a term which itself embraces a wide group, ranging from the leading military and civil magnates down to simple tagmatic soldiers), many of those registered in the military rolls were relatively well-off compared with much of the rural population.[138]

The fact that the value of the property deemed necessary to support a thematic cavalry soldier was set at some 4 or 5 pounds of gold, that of a marine of the naval *themata* at 2 to 3 pounds of gold, appears to support this. For in respect of what is known about land prices for the period, this appears at first sight to represent more than simply a peasant holding, but a substantial small estate. In consequence the theme soldiers whose property attained this value might be thought of as being relatively well-off, an established rural elite. While the price of land varied regionally, 4 pounds of gold (i.e., 288 *nomismata*) would have purchased between 250 and 600 *modioi* (that is about 25 to 60 hectares, or 61 to 148 acres), according to its quality (productivity) and its use.

In the later tenth and eleventh centuries, however, a range of figures suggests that the holding of a peasant *paroikos*, or tenant, with one or two oxen could vary considerably—between about 80 and 200 *modioi*, according to the area and the estate—figures which suggest that many of those *stratiotai* who were in possession of land valued at 4 pounds of gold were not necessarily all that distinct from many ordinary peasant tenants. And it is worth recalling that the figure of 4 or 5 pounds of gold is a figure that "ought" to be sufficient, suggesting that in reality there was a great deal of variation.[139]

Of course, the legislation in which these figures appear, figures intended to protect the minimum amount of land registered and thenceforth inalienable (although it could be subdivided by inheritance), also assumes that some *stratiotai* may have possessed a

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refers to *stratiotai* who have fled to the estates of powerful persons and the Church (*eis ta archontika prosopa kai ta ton ekklesion*): see *Actes d'Iviron*, I, no. 2.3–4. At the beginning of the 10th century, Leo VI is ambiguous about thematic *stratiotai*, implying that they needed a labor force to replace them when absent on duty, and hence that they were directly involved in agricultural production; and making it clear that the theme general was to select only those who could afford the costs of campaign suggesting that many were too poor, even though registered for service: see Leo, *Takt.*, 4.1; epilog. 57.

[138] For the novel, see Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 6, 214–217 (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 656), with Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 115–56. See also the remarks of Ahrweiler, "Recherches," esp. 9–10 (although it should be pointed out that while the mention of soldiers in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos points to their official status as "above" civil society, the list of precedence itself is founded upon antiquarian and formal rather than actual social premises: why else do soldiers of the *themata* rank higher than those of the *tagmata*? The latter were much better remunerated and, put crudely, more important [as we have seen, in the middle of the 10th century *scholarioi* counted among the "powerful"]. But the fact is, the *themata* were much older than the *tagmata*. Tradition and notions of taxis and harmony have clearly outweighed real social conditions in their relevance to the system of precedence. See *Kletorologion tou Philotheou*, 161.21–22, and Oikonomides' comments, 160 note 125).

[139] Land supporting a *strateia* valued at 4 pounds of gold: Zepos, *Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 8, 223 (and cf. De cer. 695.14–18, a fragment of a document probably from the first half of the 10th century, where 4 to 5 pounds and 3 pounds, respectively, are mentioned). Land prices and values: see E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie* (= *HAW* 12.4 = Byzantinisches Handbuch 4) (Munich, 1970) 249ff, and idem, *Byzantinische Metrologische Quellen* (Düsseldorf, 1970), sect. 59–60. Size of peasant properties/holdings: Svoronos, "Remarques sur les structures économiques de l'empire byzantin au XI$^e$ siècle," *TM* 6 (1976), 49–67, see 52; Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire*, 49ff and documentation.

good deal more land than this. But it is particularly important in this connection to recall that the legislation specifies that the *strateia* (which is to say, the land which produces the income to support the *strateia*) should be of such-and-such a value, *not*, however, the holding of a single individual. Partible inheritance, which was the norm, will have brought about the fragmentation of many such properties (and hence the need for the partial *strateia*), with the result likewise that many holders of *strateia* will have held probably rather small holdings from which to earn their living, and have been relatively impoverished.[140] To speak in such a context of *stratiotai* as either "soldier-peasants" or as a rural "gentry" seems thus to oversimplify the issue.

There is a further consideration which must have had implications for the relative wealth and status of soldiers, whether holders of *strateiai* or serving men. This is the fact that, within each thematic army, there existed a differentiation between light and heavy cavalry and infantry as well as other arms—slingers, archers, and so on. In the period up to the middle of the seventh century, we may assume that, in its broad outline at least, the tactical organization of the later sixth century, as reflected in the account of Theophylact Simocatta, for example, or the so-called Strategikon of Maurice, continued to function. But what happened to the different specialist arms after the dispersal and localization of the armies had begun during the 640s and after? Did the *Boukellarioi*, for example, continue to function and be equipped as a crack division of heavy cavalry as described by the Strategikon? Similar considerations apply to the *foederati*, later forming a *tourma* in the Anatolikon *thema*, as well as the *optimatoi* (who were transformed into a support unit for the *tagmata* under Constantine V), or the *Theodosiakoi* and *Biktores* in the Thrakesion *thema*. Did the different *banda* into which each of the later thematic *tourmai* were divided maintain their original tactical armament, with all the implications for the cost of weapons and armor, training, and skills, that this entails? Or was this lost and reduced to a common denominator over the centuries?[141]

Lack of space prevents a full discussion of these issues here, important though they are. But for all these reasons, I do not think that the *stratiotai* formed a distinct *social* group, as *stratiotai*, although many of them must have belonged to a stratum of petty landlords and some to the lower reaches of the "powerful." By the same token, the extent to which a particular juridical status gave the poorer soldiers who held a *strateia* a slightly higher social position in anything other than legal fiction, therefore, is very difficult to determine. It may well be that their position was reinforced, for a time at least, by the imperial legislation protecting the properties on which service was based. And it must be remembered that this applied both to the actual soldiers, as well as to those whose properties supported the *strateia*. The position of the wealthiest theme sol-

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[140] A text that appears to date from before the novel in question, however (albeit of the later 9th or early 10th century), implies that the *individual* must possess the appropriate value (although the phrasing can be seen as ambiguous), see *De cer.* 695.14–18; in contrast, for the *strateia* as the subject of the valuation, see Zepos, *Jus* I, 223. For patterns of inheritance, and their effects, see e.g., Ostrogorsky, "Die ländliche Steuergemeinde," 35–37; Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire,* 39. The legislation makes clear reference to considerable differences of wealth between *stratiotai:* see, e.g., Zepos, *Jus* I, 225 (a well-off *stratiotes* who buys the stratiotic land of a poor *stratiotes* paid the same penalty as a powerful landowner).

[141] For all the units mentioned here, see Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians,* 96ff, 173ff, 199–202, 222ff, 236–241, 246ff.

diers with *strateiai* may, as already mentioned, have been further enhanced by the legis-
lation of Nicephorus II, insofar as it expanded the gulf between the wealthier and
poorer *stratiotai*.[142] By the same token, it appears to have dramatically hastened the fis-
calization of the *strateia* in general, with the result that the regular theme forces, of little
military value in active offensive warfare, were more and more neglected, while the
imperial armies were increasingly composed of professional, full-time soldiers, whether
indigenous or not, whose local loyalties and embryonic associations with Byzantine so-
ciety at the local level rapidly declined. The army of the later tenth and eleventh cen-
turies became, in effect, socially deracinated.

The period about which we are least well informed remains that of the seventh and
eighth centuries. We can only guess that the fiscal and juridical advantages of register-
ing as a soldier brought social advantages too, just as they had done in the late Roman
period, although once again there must have always existed differences in social stand-
ing consequent upon wealth and military role. But even in the crisis period of the tenth
century such advantages must still have been important: Constantine VII's seventh
novel makes it clear that individuals were still registering themselves and their proper-
ties, which they would hardly have done had it not been of advantage to them.[143]

The general position of thematic soldiers as a special category in the late Roman
sense begins to deteriorate from the tenth century, however. This is a result of several
developments. First, the increasing tendency, which by the time of the reign of Constan-
tine Monomachos (1042–55) had become general, except in certain border *themata* or
provinces, to fiscalize the burden of military service, the *strateia*, so that it was commuted
into a regular cash tax.[144] Under Monomachos, the remaining border forces (of Meso-
potamia and Iberia) were also stood down, their service likewise being commuted for a
regular cash payment.[145] The category of military lands continued to exist throughout
the eleventh century, although the *strateia* came to represent merely one fiscal obligation
among several.[146] In addition, with the use of the device of *pronoia* to maintain soldiers
(occasionally in the eleventh century, increasingly during the second half of the twelfth

[142] A point emphasized also by Dagron, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, 186, 267–72. For the equivalence of the
privileges (*pronomia*) of both active soldiers and those who were merely responsible for a *strateia*, see Zepos,
*Jus* I, Coll. 3, Nov. 8 (224.20–26) and the discussion on *adoreia* above.

[143] See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 46.

[144] Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 59ff, and esp. Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 19ff.

[145] Zonaras, III, 647; Attaleiates (*Historia*, Bonn ed. [1853]), 44; Kekaumenos (*Cecaumeni Strategicon et
incerti scriptoris de officiis regiis libellus*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky, V. Jernstedt [St. Petersburg, 1896; Amsterdam,
1965]), 18 (more recent ed.: *Sov'eti i rasskazi Kekavmena: sočinenie vizantijskogo polkovodtsa XI veka*, ed., trans.,
and comm. G. G. Litavrin [Moscow, 1972]). See Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative
de l'empire byzantin," 144.

[146] See esp. Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 21–23. The letter of Psellos referred to above (note 132) mentions
the case of a man who cannot afford the financial burden of supporting the *strateia*, and who requests that
he be permitted to serve instead. The letter indicates the possibility that personal service was still on occa-
sion demanded. See note 121 above. The *logothetes tou stratiotikou* is last mentioned in documents for 1088
(*Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi sacra et profana*, ed. F. Miklosich and J. Müller, 2 vols. [Acta Patriarchatus
Constantinopolitani] [Vienna, 1860–62], VI, 50–51, 55; with Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation
administrative de l'empire byzantin," 136 note 62). The occasional references to *stratiotika ktemata* thereafter
seem to refer to lands belonging to soldiers as simple private property (for example, Miklosich-Müller, *Acta
et Diplomata Graeca*, IV, 319, where the landed property of soldiers, the Church, and monasteries are listed
together).

century and after), and with the reliance of the state on salaried tagmatic units made up of a mixture of both Byzantines and foreigners, together with foreign mercenaries under their own leaders, the peasants who had previously supplied the core of the theme armies were no longer differentiated from the mass of the rural population.

This does not mean that soldiers did not continue to enjoy a particular legal status: there is no reason to think that non-Byzantines under their own leaders were treated any differently from indigenous soldiers. In respect of traditional juridical privileges and fiscal exemptions, it was the name and title of soldier which continued to be crucial, not the possession of a particular category of land. Whatever their origins, soldiers continued to be vital to the survival of the state. The emperor Alexios I praised those knights and footsoldiers who died during the course of the First Crusade as "blessed . . . since they met their end in good intent. Moreover, we ought not to regard them as dead, but living and transported to live everlasting and incorruptible"—echoing perhaps the sentiments expressed by the author of the treatise on skirmishing warfare more than a century earlier.[147]

[147] For the comment of Alexios I, see H. Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100* (Innsbruck, 1901), Alexios I, letter 11 (152–153). See J. Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy Towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *ByzF* 13 (1988), 67–118, esp. 109f, notes 164, 165; also Dagron, *Le traité sur la Guérilla*, 259–74, and esp. 284ff, and A. Kolia-Dermitzake, "He idea tou 'Hierou polemou' sto Byzantio kata ton 10o aiona. He martyria ton taktikon kai ton demegorion," in *Konstantinos Z' ho Porphyrogennetos kai he epoche tou* (Athens, 1989), 39–55, on the notion of a Christian "holy war" in the 10th century. The sources appear to treat all soldiers as more or less equal, although reference to their privileges and legal status is never direct. For the institution of *pronoia*, on which an enormous amount has been written, see in the last instance H. Ahrweiler, "La Pronoia à Byzance," in *Structures féodales et féodalisme dans l'Occident méditerranéen (Xe–XIIIe siècles), Bilan et perspectives de recherches* (= Collection de l'École française de Rome 44) (Rome, 1980), 681–89; K. Chvostova, "Pronija: Social'no-ekonomičeskie i pravovye problemy'," *VizVrem* 49 (1988), 13–23; N. Oikonomides, "A propos des armées des premiers Paléologues et des compagnies de soldats," *TM* 8 (1981), 353–71, esp. 353–55, 367–68. On the pay of "tagmatic" and mercenary soldiers, see *Logos Nouthetetikos* (in *Cecaumeni Strategicon*, ed. Wassiliewsky-Jernstedt, 93–104), 94.24ff. Native Byzantine units, and foreigners recruited into such units, continued to be registered on muster rolls and paid by imperial officials on an individual basis (see, for example, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn [= CFHB 5] [Berlin-New York, 1973], 487.34–488.1, where imperial officials issue their gold rhoga to Cappadocian troops). The sons of mercenary soldiers, as inheritors of their fathers' military equipment, were permitted in the later period certainly to replace their deceased fathers in active service (see *Pseudo-Kodinos, Traité des offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux [Paris, 1966], 251.14–18), evidence both for the continued strength of the notion of the hereditary nature of military service, and for the fact that the state must have kept up-to-date military registers of all such units (the principle is ancient, of course—such regulations for the sons of deceased soldiers existed in the later Roman period and into the 10th century, so that the practice probably had a continuous existence: see the references at Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 23f, 48 note 83). It is unclear whether foreign units under their own commanders, such as those of Roussel, Crispin, and others, were left under their own organization and paid in a lump sum, distributed by the leader. This seems to have been the practice in the later period—see, for example, Hendy, *Studies*, 27f, on the Catalans in 1303, but the sources are not very clear for the 11th and 12th centuries. The 6,000 mercenaries raised among the Alans by Nicephorus Palaeologus for Michael VII were probably paid in a lump sum (which they demanded before they would attack the rebel mercenary Roussel de Bailleul): this at least is one implication of the phrase "when the Alans demanded the agreed payment" (*Nicephori Bryennii Historiarum libri quattuor*, ed. P. Gautier [= CFHB 9] [Brussels, 1975], 183.9–10). In a slightly different case, the 700 slave soldiers of the refugee Mansur b. Lu'lu whom Basil II received in 1016 appear to have been registered individually on the military rolls and paid in the usual manner, as in the case of the Cappadocian soldiers referred to already (Yahya of Antioch, *History* [ed. L. Cheikho, in CSCO, ser. Arab., 3.7 (Beirut-Leipzig-Paris, 1909)], see III, 214; and J. H. Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938–1034) of Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṭākī," Ph.D. diss. [Univ. of Michigan, 1977], 545). References to other mercenary forces re-

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Second, one of the reasons for the important position of soldiers in practical terms in the period from the seventh to the tenth century was the absence of any other focus save the armies for nonmetropolitan or provincial opinion, and the central position of the *strategoi*, the thematic commanders, in imperial politics. From the tenth century, the recovery of commerce and provincial urban fortunes, coupled with the civilianization of thematic administration into the first half of the eleventh century, with the rise to prominence of a provincial magnate class and with the disposable wealth and the influence of all who held imperial titles, altered these conditions, so that the structural position of soldiers in society as a whole changed.

This is a very important point, for it seems to me that, with the developments of the middle and later seventh century, soldiers had become an increasingly integral part of rural provincial society, much more so than they had ever been before.[148] The military lands, as they were eventually defined during the tenth century, were a by-product of this integration; and as the state's demands for soldiers in the offensive and expansionist campaigns of the tenth century and the political considerations of the eleventh century stimulated radical changes in both the mode of supporting the armies, on the one hand (fiscalization of the *strateia*), and the sources of soldiers, on the other, so the military lands and the provincial armies or militias which they had supported ultimately passed away, although it has to be said that there are a number of unresolved questions in this respect. During the course of the tenth century, there set in a process of separation of the regular troops of the empire from the mass of the ordinary, rural population, a process which was completed by the last quarter of the eleventh century and which I have already characterized as one of social deracination.

But this change in the structural position of the soldier, and in the organization and financing of the armies, did not necessarily affect their position in the ideological scheme of things. It did mean a greater distance between provincial society and the armies, as the latter came increasingly to be made up of men not recruited from, and

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cruited under their own leaders give no details. The otherwise unattested Pappas (Bryennios, 169.13–14), as well as Roussel de Bailleul (Zonaras, III, 709.12–13; Bryennios, 147.23f, and 146 note 8; Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, I, 2ff [ed. B. Leib, *Anne Comnène, Aléxiade,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1937–45)]), Robert Crispin (Bryennios, 134 note 2, 148, note 1, 147.23f; Attaleiates, 21ff), Hervé (Skylitzes, 467.5–6, 485.53–54) all arrived with their contingents, and may therefore have been paid lump sums. In the case of Harald Hardrada, however, the Norse source suggests that he and his followers were enrolled individually into the Varangian division, and were in consequence paid their salaries on the traditional basis. See *Logos Nouthetetikos,* 97.2ff; *The Saga of Harald Sigurdarson* (in *Heimskringla,* ed. B. Adalbjarnarson, Islenzk Fornrit, XXVI-XXVIII [Reykjavik, 1941–51]), III, 70ff, and see S. Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium,* ed. and revised B. S. Benedikz [Cambridge, 1978], 54ff. It is reasonable to suppose that the general principle of enrolling mercenaries individually was applied to members of other bands also. An important text in this respect is *Peira* 14.16 [47], where it is argued that a foreigner who accepts Byzantine positions and emoluments must also be judged according to Byzantine law, rather than being permitted [in this particular case] to make his will in accordance with his own laws, *ethnikos*).

[148] It is also possible that traditional forms of civil-military tension were lessened, as provincial theme soldiers increasingly stayed in or near the communities from which they were raised, having to live their lives for much of the year within the constraints of normative social and economic relationships. The same would hold for troops garrisoned on a permanent basis in the areas they had to defend, or police, during the late Roman period, of course, and the evidence assembled by Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 662–63, would tend to bear this out.

based for a much shorter time in, the areas they happened to be passing through or defending. And while this does not mean that *tagmata* recruited from the provinces were never based in their own districts, nor that traditional thematic forces could not still be raised (until the 1070s, at least), it does mean that the full-time and mercenary basis on which they served qualitatively affected their relationship to the population from which they were drawn.[149] The contrast between the two periods is brought out most clearly in the archival documents, from which it is clear that the notorious institution of *mitaton* served as one of the main means of supporting troops, both in transit and in their camps as well as not on active service—in the earlier period, the majority of provincial soldiers had been dispersed in their homes (the need for a general muster before campaigns, so frequently referred to in the sources up to the first half of the tenth century, is ample evidence for this), and billeted on civilians only during campaigns.[150] Nothing could illustrate more clearly the shift from a system of partly self-supporting soldier-militias, raised and maintained on a local basis, to that of an essentially mercenary army which had to be supported by cash and corvées imposed upon the ordinary population than the regular occurrence in the surviving archival documents of exemptions from *mitaton* and related *aggareiai* granted by the emperors to monastic and ecclesiastical landlords. Eleventh-century sources refer quite clearly to the cantonment of mercenary troops in the provinces, without doubt through the application of *mitaton*. Interestingly, the anonymous treatise on campaign procedures written in the reign of either John I Tzimiskes or Basil II implies that general *adnoumia* or musters had fallen out of use in recent years, evidence perhaps of the preeminent role of "tagmatic" units raised on a mercenary basis, for whom such musters or "call-ups" would not be relevant.[151]

Such soldiers were as important as ever to the defense and security of the state, Orthodoxy, and the dominant social groups, and in the official ideology they still held their significance. But the transformation of the structures of state administration, and

[149]For local theme forces of the traditional type, see Cedrenus II, 527.19–528.6; other examples at Cedrenus II, 543.17ff; Attaleiates, 93.7–11; 95.14–96.1; Cedrenus II, 660.14–20; 662.12–17 (indigenous *tagmata* and local *themata*); Attaleiates 155.6–7 (local and tagmatic troops again); Cedrenus II, 694.2 and 692.10—the contrast between indigenous troops and the *misthophorikon* (Franks, Uzes, and others) in 1071.

[150]See Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 9; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, 63 and note 112; 75f; *Byzantine Praetorians,* 104 note 63, 324, and note 993. See also note 132 above.

[151]See Oikonomides, "L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin," 144, who notes the massive increase in the number of ethnically distinct mercenary groups dependent on this corvée between 1044 and 1088. Note esp. A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Komnenen* (= MiscByzMonac, 1) (Munich, 1965), 46ff. For the dispersal of mercenary units in winter quarters and billeted on the local population, see, for example, Skylitzes, 485.53–54 (Frankish troops under Hervé dispersed in the Armeniakon district *eis paracheimasian*); Cedrenus, 508.19–20 (Varangians dispersed *eis paracheimasian* in the *thema Thrakesion*); ibid., 608.18–19 (Franks and Varangians scattered in winter quarters in Iberia and Chaldia). Other examples: a letter of Nicephorus Uranus to the *krites* of the Thrakesion theme, at the end of the 10th century, requesting exemption from *mitaton*, which he said was economically damaging to his household (Darrouzès, *Epistoliers*, no. 42, 241–42); and, from an earlier period, one from Patriarch Nicholas I concerning the billeting of soldiers on the estate of the widow of the *drouggarios* of the Watch (ibid., no. 31, 120–21). For the anonymous treatise, see Dagron, *Le traité sur la Guérilla,* 273 and note 45; for the text: *Campaign Organisation and Tactics,* ed. and trans. G. T. Dennis, in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises.* Text, trans., and notes (CFHB 25 =DOT 9). (Washington, D.C., 1985), cap. 29 (320–322).

of the relationship between the state, the ruling elite of magnate clans, holders of im-
perial dignities, the wealthy and middling urban and landowning families, on the one
hand, and the depressed rural population, on the other, lent to the armies and their
members a very different character and position in the structure of late Byzantine soci-
ety and politics. In spite of the dramatic changes that affected Roman administration
and institutions during and after the seventh century, it would be reasonable to con-
clude that what we in fact have until the tenth century is a highly evolved version of the
late Roman state, together with the institutional norms and structures which were in-
herited from that time. From the tenth to the twelfth century, these institutions are
further radically transformed, with the result that the military comes to occupy a very
different position in society, and to represent a very different set of institutions and
social relationships from those which had gone before.

The history of its development after the twelfth century has been supplied by other
scholars. In particular, attention has been drawn to the shifts in strategic priorities
which followed from the empire's isolated and internally unstable position from the
1260s onward, shifts which themselves promoted a very different, and very much more
heterogeneous military structure than was the case in the earlier period. But that is yet
another story, already taken up by other historians, and I do not wish to pursue it
here.[152]

### IX. Some Conclusions

Let me sum up the main points, as I see them, about the evolution of Byzantine
military institutions in their social and political context, especially those concerned with
the recruitment and maintenance of soldiers, from the seventh to the eleventh cen-
turies.

To begin with, there is no doubt that there always existed a number of parallel
modes of recruiting and maintaining soldiers. What varied across time was the emphasis
placed upon different modes, according to the needs of the state and the economic and
fiscal exigencies which constrained imperial policy. In the second place, it is clear that
both the *themata* as administrative regions and the connection between military service
and the private or family income of soldiers (land) have their roots in the crisis period
of the second half of the seventh century. But I would stress that there is no evidence
for any deliberately planned, institutional connection between them. The withdrawal of
armies into Asia Minor, and the consequent development of territorial *themata*, certainly
entailed a localization of recruitment which led to the evolution of a connection between
the possession of land, and the obligation to support military service, for certain soldiers
and their heirs. But it is important to see that this was a historically evolved relationship,
not one that was planned by some guiding authority. We should stop thinking of the
"theme system" and the "military lands" in this way once and for all.[153] When cash

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[152]See, for example, Oikonomides, "A propos des armées des premiers Paléologues et des compagnies
de soldats," *TM* 8 (1981), 353–71; and especially M. C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Soldier: A Social and
Administrative Study*, 2 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1984; Ann Arbor, 1990).

[153]These points were made by both Karayannopoulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*
(Munich, 1959), esp. 87ff, as well as by Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 150; see also Haldon, *Recruitment and
Conscription*, 79; although it seems that they still need to be repeated.

resources and manpower were in short supply, these two complementary developments were the best the rump of the late Roman state could offer in managing its military and its fiscal needs. Side by side with the provincial soldiers supported wholly or partially by their own resources, and registered in the state muster lists, there existed both mercenary soldiers recruited from outside the empire or from among warlike groups within the empire, as well as mercenary (i.e., full-time) regular soldiers in each theme (note that I employ the term "mercenary" in a value-free sense, to refer simply to "professional," paid soldiers who enlist individually or in groups for specific campaigns or a specific number of years). Most of these points are not disputed. But as most of this article has shown, there still remains considerable disagreement over the actual functioning of the *strateia* and its relationship to both land and people, as well as over the origins of the institution in the first place.

In addition, I would henceforth hesitate to speak of a theme "system" or a "system" of military lands. What the sources in fact permit us to describe is a fairly open-ended network of context-bound, institutional practices, which represent a rather more fluid set of relationships than the word "system" allows.

This network of modes of recruiting and maintaining soldiers worked comparatively well in the situation which engendered it, but once conditions changed, the nature of the demands made upon it changed also. And it must be stressed that conditions changed fairly rapidly from the middle of the eighth century. A first stage in this process of transformation is marked by the tactical organizational reforms undertaken by Constantine V, then by the policies of Emperor Nicephorus I, as recorded, however biased and slanted the report, by Theophanes. Other hints as to how these structures evolved appear in sources of the middle and later ninth century, particularly associated with the reign of Basil I, but also with that of Theophilus; and there is a real watershed with the legislation of the Macedonian emperors. For the imperial promulgations of the tenth century represent not just the rulers' concern with the welfare of the peasantry and the soldiers drawn from them, nor with the increasing threat posed by the *dynatoi* to the resources at the state's disposal, nor again the structure of a complex and relatively efficient state apparatus. On the contrary, I would argue that this legislation represents the last, failed efforts of the central administration to shore up a mode of recruiting and maintaining soldiers which was already obsolete—by reason of circumstances vastly different from those in which it was first made possible, and because of the demands of the expansive warfare and campaigning necessitated by imperial policy with regard to both the Caliphate and the empire's western neighbors in the tenth century. The reign of Nicephorus II Phocas, as has generally been recognized, marks the key moment: the massive increase and redistribution of the burden of maintaining soldiers attributed to this emperor can only reflect an increase in the use of mercenary, that is to say, professional, full-time forces on a large scale.[154]

The early stages of this process of decreasing relevance and increasing inefficiency (defined functionally in relation to the aims and methods of state policy) of the locally recruited and part-time thematic forces can be seen already in the eighth century. The increasing reliance on full-time, "tagmatic" units from the 780s and 790s, the increasing

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[154]See above, and notes 98 and 125.

deployment of mercenary forces through the ninth and into the tenth century, reflect not simply the expansion of warfare in the tenth century. Rather, it reflects the increasing relative inefficiency of the system of relying on armies largely consisting of part-time peasant conscripts which had developed under one set of circumstances, in a very different political and economic context in which the state was not only taking the offensive militarily on a long-term basis, but could once more afford to pay substantial cash sums for professional warriors.

The state always continued to maintain professional troops, as we have seen. The seventh and early eighth centuries should perhaps be regarded, therefore, not as the period in which a "new" system was planned, evolved, and established, but rather as a period in which the state's financial situation made the provincialization of recruitment and maintenance of the armies unavoidable, not because the state wanted its armies to become a sort of part-time "militia," but because that is the effect which the exigencies of the situation produced in the old structures. On the contrary, it is clear that the state continued to treat its thematic armies as regular forces, even when they were no longer able to respond as such; so that the increasing reliance on ever-larger numbers of paid, professional soldiers, as soon as economic conditions permitted, is quite predictable, a development which is paralleled exactly by the increasing provincialization and devaluation of the thematic conscript armies. Beginning with the reforms of Nicephorus I, which to my mind reflect the continuing efforts of the state to minimize direct state financing of the armies as far as possible, the period up to the reign of Nicephorus II marks the progressive, if piecemeal, response of successive generations of state officials and rulers to a pattern of recruitment and maintenance of field armies generated in and tailored to the situation of the second half of the seventh century. While it may once have represented the only adequate functional response to a particular situation, it was already in the middle of the eighth century showing signs of strain; by the middle of the tenth century it is clear that it could no longer adequately meet the demands placed upon it. In this particular context, it is also important to emphasize that, in the later ninth and tenth centuries at least, those who held a *strateia* in respect of furnishing a soldier or the resources to maintain a soldier did not compose a homogeneous social group. On the contrary, there were very considerable variations in the individual fortunes of such *stratiotai*, so that to consider them as either a peasant militia or a class of well-to-do rural estate-holders would be, in my view, incorrect.

The effects of the long-term structural incapacity referred to above were expressed in what we can identify as a clear move away from reliance on armies made up of locally recruited conscripts supported by local resources, and the transformation of those resources into fiscalized revenues. As a result, resources for the maintenance of armies were once more routed through and concentrated at the center of imperial power. The "theme" armies disappear, to be replaced by units of full-time soldiers recruited from all the provinces of the empire as well as from outside, paid and maintained through central government agents and the imposition on the provincial populations of a wide range of extraordinary demands and corvées. These changes had, of course, a direct effect on the political power struggles within the dominant social elite of the empire.

I have presented a highly selective discussion of recent debates on Byzantine military administration. I hope I have been able to demonstrate the central importance of the

study of its army and related institutions for the history of the later Roman and Byzantine state and the society which it embraced.

The University of Birmingham

*Postscript*

Recent works not included in the notes to this article are relevant to the debates under discussion and deserve mention here. Particularly important is Michel Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 10) (Paris, 1992), esp. 231–53, on the social and economic position of soldiers in the village community.

On land prices (see note 139 and the accompanying text), see J.-C. Cheynet, E. Malamut, and C. Morrisson, "Prix et salaires à Byzance (Xe–XVe siècle)," in *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin*, II: *VIIIe–XVe siècle,* ed. V. Kravari, J. Lefort, and C. Morrisson (Paris, 1991), 339–74.

Finally, on the term *thema*, see the discussion by J. Koder, "Zur Bedeutungsentwicklung des byzantinischen Terminus *Thema*," *JÖB* 40 (1990), 155–65. Koder's analysis suggests that the term may have been used before the middle of the seventh century to refer to any "designated area," coming as a result of the withdrawal of the armies into Anatolia to refer also to the latter, now established in specific areas. If his results are accepted, this would be further corroboration for the suggestion made above (see pp. 7–8) that the armies were distributed according to the ability of specific regions to support them.

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## MIDDLE-BYZANTINE PROVINCIAL RECRUITS: SALARY AND ARMAMENT

### N. OIKONOMIDÈS

The present article is divided into two parts. In the first are examined some texts concerning the payment of salaries to the theme soldiers in the ninth and tenth centuries; in the second, the focus turns to texts of the eighth century concerning soldiers of the provinces, who seem to have been recruited according to the same principles as those of the ninth and tenth centuries.

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The farmer soldiers of the themes constituted an important part of the Byzantine armies, at least until the tenth century. They have been described as small land owners whose holdings were inscribed in the military registers, and who, in exchange for being exempted from secondary taxes and corvées, were obliged to serve in the province's army with their own horse(s) and armament — or, if this was for some reason impossible, they were obliged to make a cash payment to the State (στρατεία, with the fiscal meaning of the term).[1] The question of the salary that they would receive does not enter clearly in this picture, in spite of the fact that such salaries are well attested: ninth century sources, for instance, mention enemy raiders, the Bulgars and the Arabs, who managed to capture the salaries (ῥόγα) of the themes: once in the region of Strymon (809: 79200 gold coins) and once in the Armeniakoi (811: 93600 gold coins).[2]

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[1] Some relatively recent publications: P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Galway 1979) 115ff.; J. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550-950: A Study on the Origins of the Stratiotika Ktemata* (Vienna 1979), passim.

[2] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor (Leipzig 1883) I, 484, 489.

An important text, but difficult to explain, is preserved in the Book of Ceremonies of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos.[3] It has been commented upon by several scholars and, recently and extensively, by P. Yannopoulos.[4]

> ἰστέον ὅτι τὸ παλαιὸν τύπος ἦν τὰ θέματα ῥογεύεσθαι κατὰ τέσσαρα ἔτη, οἱονεὶ τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ ὁ Ἀνατολικός, ὁ Ἀρμενιακός, ὁ Θρᾳκήσιος· τῷ δὲ ἑτέρῳ χρόνῳ ὁ Ὀψικιανός, ὁ Βουκελλάριος, ὁ Καππάδοξ· τῷ δὲ ἄλλῳ χρόνῳ ὁ Χαρσιανίτης, ὁ Κολωνείας, ὁ Παφλαγωνίας· καὶ πάλιν τῷ ἑτέρῳ ὁ τῆς Θρᾴκης, ὁ Μακεδονίας, ὁ Χαλδίας. καὶ τῶν δ΄ χρόνων διελθόντων, πάλιν ἐρρογεύοντο τὰ ῥογευθέντα θέματα τῷ πρώτῳ χρόνῳ.

> One must know that in the past there was a formal arrangement according to which the themes received salaries every four years, that is: this year, the Anatolikon, the Armeniakon and the Thrakesion; the following year, the Opsikion, the Boukellarioi and Cappadocia; the year after, Charsianon, Koloneia and Paphlagonia; and the year after this, Thrace, Macedonia and Chaldia. And after the four years had elapsed, salaries were paid again to the themes that had been paid the first year.

Before proceeding to any further discussion, one has to give some explanations concerning the wording of the text: all the themes are mentioned by the name of their *strategos*: ὁ Ἀνατολικός means ὁ στρατηγὸς τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν, ὁ τῆς Θρᾴκης means ὁ στρατηγὸς τῆς Θρᾴκης, etc. In my translation, I have used instead the name of the theme because I understand that the *strategos* acted as an intermediary between the treasury and the soldiers; he received the global amount and distributed it to his subordinates. This is how all scholars have understood the passage, which speaks clearly of the *roga* of the themes (τὰ θέματα ῥογεύεσθαι) and not of the one of the *strategoi*. Moreover, it is hardly possible to imagine *strategoi* who received a

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[3] Constantini Porphyrogeniti, *De Cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn 1829) I, 493-494.

[4] P. A. Yannopoulos, "Une liste des thèmes dans le 'Livre des Cérémonies' de Constantin Porphyrogénète," *Byzantina* 12 (1983) 233-246.

salary every fourth year, since we know that they were appointed for a limited time (usually three years or less). On the other hand, we find, also in the Book of Ceremonies, the list of the yearly salaries paid to the *strategoi* and the *kleisourarchai* at the time of Leo VI (between 908 and 911).[5] The amounts of this list (between 2880 and 360 nomismata, depending on the importance of the province) are much smaller than the ones mentioned above as being the salaries of whole themes; it thus becomes clear that these relatively small amounts represent the yearly remuneration of the *strategoi* themselves, maybe together with their retinues, but have nothing to do with the soldiers' pay. For these reasons I think that one should make a clear distinction between the yearly *roga* of the *strategoi* and their relatively few full-time mercenary subordinates on one hand,[6] and the *roga* of the numerous farmer-soldiers on the other, which could conveivably be paid to them at irregular intervals, as their basic subsistence came from the land that they cultivated.

The document describing the four-year cycle of payment for the themes has been dated by several scholars between 863 and 911. This date is based on its contents: the four-year cycle applies to the so-called "Oriental" themes, that is the non-naval military provinces that developed in the territory of the late Roman *praefectura praetorio per Orientem*, the *strategoi* of which were also receiving a yearly salary (while the *strategoi* of the West were remunerated by collecting *sportulae*); among these themes one finds Charsianon (which was still a *kleisoura* in 863) but does not find the theme of Sebasteia (certainly created before 911).[7]

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[5] *De Cerimoniis*, 696-697.

[6] The existence of full-time mercenaries at the service of the provincial *strategoi* is shown, among other things, by the titles borne by some of their subordinates. Cf. N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles* (Paris 1972) 341 *(domestikos, kentarchos, komes tes hetaireias)*.

[7] *Ibid.*, 347, cf. 341-342 (on the meaning of Oriental themes); Yannopoulos, *loc. cit.* goes even further; first he supposes that the four-year cycle was abolished before 908-911, date of the list of salaries of the *strategoi* and because of that list — but we have seen that a distinction should be made between the salary of the *strategoi* and that of the themes; and then he speculates that the abolition of the four-year cycle should be attributed to Michael III (+ 867), on the grounds that, if the reform was due to an emperor of the Macedonian dynasty, Constantine VII would not have omitted to say so; all this is very weak, uncertain, and not useful.

Further information concerning the periodicity of payment of the thematic armies is contained in the Arab geography of Ibn Khurdadbih, and possibly derives from the mid-ninth century report of al-Jarmi:[8] "La paye du soldat . . . n'a lieu que tous les trois ans. Il arrive même qu'on paye, en une fois, la somme représentant quatre, cinq ou six années de service."[9] Here again we are informed of soldiers' salaries that are paid in distant intervals — and possibly irregular ones.

In order to understand the significance of the four-year cycle, one has to understand, first of all, the reason for which this text has been introduced in the Book of Ceremonies. Is it an excerpt mentioned in order to inform the reader about a financial peculiarity of the past, or does it serve a different purpose? All scholars have accepted the financial interpretation which certainly comes to mind at first reading, especially if the passage is taken out of its context. In his strenuous effort to compute the Byzantine army payroll in the ninth century, W. Treadgold writes that "the emperors . . . tried to equalize their expenditure on an annual basis."[10] This is a rational explanation of the *De Cerimoniis* text that would have reflected progress, from the accounting point of view, if compared to the irregular pay described by Ibn Khurdadbih. But is the financial interpretation the only valid one?

The paragraph we are dealing with is part of the minor treatise "on imperial campaigns" (περὶ βασιλικῶν ταξειδίων), which is found in the first folios of the Leipzig manuscript and is published as an appendix to the first book of the *De Cerimoniis* in the Bonn edition.[11] At the beginning we find the list of the permanent camps of Asia Minor (ἄπληκτα), then a detailed description of the preparations that used to be made when an emperor participated personally in a campaign. Then starts a new text[12] that Constantine VII wrote for his own son Romanos, on the basis of a systematic treatise that the *magistros* Leon Katakylas had composed under the reign of Leo VI

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[8] Al Jarmi has been in the center of a recent animated discussion: F. Winkelmann, "Probleme der Informationen des al-G̃armi über die byzantinischen Provinzen," *Byzantinoslavica* 43 (1982) 18-29; W. Treadgold, "Remarks on Al Jarmi," *Byzantinoslavica* 44 (1983) 205-212.

[9] M. J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* 6 (Leyden 1889) 84.

[10] W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine State Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (New York 1982) 14 ff.

[11] *De Cerimoniis*, 444 ff.

[12] *De Cerimoniis*, 455 ff.

(886-912), describing what used to be done in the times of previous emperors (Theophilos, Michael III and Basil I, that is between 829 and 886) following a tradition that went back to the Isaurian dynasty (717-797): ceremonies, collection of pack animals, the emperor's baggage train, reserve equipment, preparation of the imperial convoy, security, order of marching in Byzantine territory and in enemy territory. There follows a long postscript which is particularly interesting for us because it contains the excerpt that we are studying.[13] Constantine VII, still addressing his son, tells him that it is now time for him to learn what was done before the campaigns (τὰ πρὸ τῶν ταξειδίων γινόμενα):

1. The system of optical telegraph devised to inform the emperor of a possible Arab raid, which would have been purportedly abolished by Michael III.

2. The paragraph that we are studying concerning the *roga* of the themes that was paid every four years in the past.

3. A list of checks that had to be conducted by each *strategos*: he should make sure that each *bandon* of his theme has its own smith (κομοδρόμον) and shoemaker (τζαγγάριον); that each *bandon* carries three water skins (that would enable the soldiers to cross deep or difficult rivers), together with several other tools.

It is clear that the three above texts are put together because they show three successive stages of preparing a campaign: information that the enemy is attacking, *roga* of the thematic armies, precautions to be taken by the *strategos* so that his army will not miss anything essential while on the move. In other words, the verb ῥογεύεσθαι is used here in order to indicate the mobilization of the thematic armies — a mobilization that most probably coincided with the distribution of the *roga* to the soldiers. Do we not know that the word ἀδνούμιον, which initially meant the payment of the salary, ended up by meaning the troop review?

By introducing in this part of his book the paragraph that we are studying, Constantine VII wanted to inform his son about the past habit of mobilizing and paying the thematic armies once every four years. The preserved historical sources seldom mention the names of the themes involved in military conflicts and consequently it is

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[13] *De Cerimoniis*, 492-494.

impossible to check the accuracy of this information. Of course, we know of cases of major operations in which all "Oriental" themes participated — such as the battle of Poson in 863.[14] But these were situations of exceptional importance and of a defensive character. Were *all* the themes ever mobilized for an attack into enemy territory?

It is clear to my mind that a text declaring that three themes were mobilized and paid salaries every year, describes the units that in normal times constituted part of the standing army for the campaigning season of this year — the themes that, together with the *tagmata*, were at the emperor's disposal for quick defensive intervention or for a campaign abroad. The Life of St. Philaretos describes how, in the late eighth century, an offensive campaign against the Arabs was preceded by an *adnoumion* of the provincial cavalry;[15] an *adnoumion* is also mentioned just before the campaign in the military handbook of Leo VI,[16] while other sources mention clearly the distribution of the *roga* to the themes before marching against the enemy.[17] The most eloquent texts in this respect, also preserved in the Book of Ceremonies, are the accounts of the campaigns against Crete in 911 and 949.[18]

In both campaigns the participants received a salary (ῥόγα) before sailing to Crete. The mercenaries received higher salaries and were supposed to be paid with some frequency. In the case of the navy Mardaïtai it is clearly said that they received one gold coin per month.[19] In the case of the *scholarioi*, we find the remark that they were expected to own their complete equipment "provided that they have received all their *roga*"; if not, the state would provide them with what they were missing:[20] this clause shows clearly that the payment of the mercenaries' *roga* could have been delayed — consequently that it was normally paid with some frequency. No such provisions are mentioned concerning the soldiers of the themes — I suppose because they were not expected to receive any *roga* prior to their mobilization for the campaign.

[14] *Theophanes Continuatus*, Bonn ed., 181. Cf. for 778, Theophanes I, 451.
[15] M.-H. Fourmy and M. Leroy, "La Vie de Saint Philarète," *Byzantion* 9 (1934) 125-127.
[16] Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 107, 725A.
[17] *Theophanes Continuatus*, Bonn ed., 475.
[18] *De Cerimoniis*, 651-669.
[19] *De Cerimoniis*, 668.
[20] *De Cerimoniis*, 658.

Things are even clearer in the case of the theme of Thrakesion in 949:[21] most of its soldiers have been obliged to pay 4 *nomismata* to the State in order to avoid being mobilized themselves; the money that was thus collected was used to pay the salaries of the soldiers of the theme of Charpezikion, who actually participated in the campaign. This is a procedure already mentioned in the Tactics of Leo VI; we know that it was also applied in the theme of Peloponnese in 921.[22] What is important for our purposes, though, is that there was no permanent provision for the *roga* of the Charpezikion — consequently this *roga* was paid only when the need arose because of the theme's participation in the campaign.

There is a further interesting detail: only a small number of the Thrakesion military participated in the campaign — mainly officers or non-commissioned officers or mercenary soldiers, a total of 150 men. Others remained at home in order to protect the province. None of them received any salary. And the account states clearly that the Thrakesion sailed to Crete "without any salary" (ἀρόγευτον). Here again, the payment of the *roga* is related to the participation in a campaign away from one's own province. No salaries are paid to the soldiers left at home, even if they were expected to protect the Byzantine territory from possible attack. No mention is made of the 150 full-time mercenaries, because the payment of their salaries did not depend on their participation in the campaign.

A general image emerges from the above:

1.   The theme soldiers certainly received a salary when they left home, being mobilized outside their province.

2.   They were most probably not paid for defending their own province.

3.   "In the past," says Constantine VII referring to an unspecified time in the period 863-911, the army of each theme was usually mobilized (and paid a salary) once every four years. We assume that in these years it was part of the standing army.

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[21] *De Cerimoniis*, 666, 669.

[22] Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 107, 1069 A-B; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington, D.C. 1967), chs. 51 and 52. Cf. also my remarks in *Actes de Dionysiou* (Paris 1968), no. 1, p. 39.

4.   Later this formula was changed, but we do not know if
there were any regular call-ups; Ibn Khurdadbih also alludes to ir-
regular mobilizations of the themes, but his information might refer to
a period earlier than the one of Constantine VII.

5.   In the tenth century, when the soldiers of a theme had to
be mobilized, they sometimes had the choice between going them-
selves to campaign (and receiving a salary) or paying (in order to buy
off their participation in the campaign) and staying home.[23]

These were obviously farmer soldiers, who lived at home for
most of the time and were obliged to maintain their military equip-
ment and be ready for an eventual call-up. Most of the years, they
worked their fields; if an enemy attacked, they defended their prop-
erties without being paid. This was sheer self-defence. But when there
was a call-up, they had to abandon their holding to the other members
of their families and participate in the campaign, often without re-
ceiving any rations from the State, their maintenance being part of
their own responsibility.[24] But they received a salary, a *roga*, which
thus appears as a compensation for missing at least part of a working
season on their fields as well as a payment intended to boost their
morale and attract them to the armed service, the basic costs of which
were covered by the revenues of their partly tax-exempt holding.

The above image invites us to turn now to a clause contained
in Constantine VII's *novella* concerning the "normal" value of military

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[23] This formula could better explain a passage of the Life of St. Euthymios the Younger,
where it is said that Euthymios' mother, the widow of a soldier, decided to enroll
her son in the army because she was "pressed by the campaign": καταγχομένη
τῇ τῆς ἐκστρατείας ἐπιθέσει. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 145, proposes to correct
ἐκστρατείας (campaign) to στρατείας (military obligation) and this seems reason-
able. But the word ἐκστρατεία may as well be kept, if one thinks that the payment
of the *strateia* was required only in case of a campaign. Euthymios, being too young,
was not then mobilized and it seems that he managed to avoid active military service
for several years. The Life of St. Euthymios is published by L. Petit, "Vie et office
de Saint Euthyme le Jeune," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 8 (1903) 155-205, 503-536
and has been reprinted in *Bibliothèque hagiographique orientale* 5 (Paris 1904).

[24] The Lives of St. Nikon Metanoeite and St. Luke the Stylite attest clearly the cases
of soldiers who did not receive rations from the State but received from home all
that was necessary for their maintenance: cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 146-149;
Haldon, *Recruitment*, 45.

holdings.[25] A value of four pounds of gold was deemed fit for the *strateiai* of horsemen as well as for those of sailors of the naval themes of Aigaion Pelagos, of Samos and of the Kibyrraiotai, whose service was very heavy because they had to personally provide for their equipment as fighters and as oarsmen (αὐτόστολοι καὶ αὐτερέται). This kind of service is opposed to that of "those who serve in the imperial *ploïmon* for a salary (ἐπὶ ῥόγαις) as well as the other sailors, (who) must possess immovable property of two pounds, according to the prevailing custom; and this seems enough (to the emperor)." The sailors mentioned here were certainly not the full-time mercenaries who constituted the nucleus of the imperial *ploïmon*, a corps very similar to the *tagmata* of the capital. They look more like auxiliaries who were called up to complete the crews of the imperial *ploïmon* only for a part of the year, undoubtedly the summer, when the necessity for such a call-up arose. When they served the navy, they also received a salary, *roga*, which was tabulated with the general expenses of the expedition in which they participated.[26] But as they served in the imperial fleet, they received all their military equipment from the State: this is shown from the chapter of the Book of Ceremonies describing in detail what weaponry was necessary to equip a warship *(dromon)* — obviously because this weaponry was provided by the State to the crew and was not the sailors' personal property.[27] In other words, these sailors were not αὐτόστολοι καὶ αὐτερέται like the ones of the maritime themes and, consequently, they did not need to have as extensive a holding as the theme horsemen or the naval theme sailors. Seen from a different angle, the above conclusion would mean that, in the eyes of the authorities, the partly tax-exempt revenue of a military holding was approximately destined half for the soldier's

[25] I. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum* I, 223. Cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 117 ff.

[26] The existence of such reservists can be deduced from studying the expenses of the campaigns against Crete. In 911, for example, we learn that the imperial *ploïmon* was 12000 strong (*De Cerimoniis*, 651) but later, in the same document, we realize that its total strength was 23002 men, out of whom only 12502 were actually paid a salary for the campaign (*De Cerimoniis*, 652, 654). I understand these 12502 to be the reservists, called up for the campaign and receiving a salary for that purpose, while the remaining 10500 were the regular mercenaries of the imperial navy, whose salaries were already paid independently from their participation in the campaign.

[27] *De Cerimoniis*, 669-671. One should note that this equipment is, among other things, made up of personal weapons (helmets, cuirasses, lances, swords, etc.), which were obviously used to equip the unarmed crew members.

maintenance and half for the purchase and maintenance of his military equipment.[28]

<center>*        *        *</center>

Thus, the regular thematic soldiers owned their armament and other equipment.[29] And this type of soldier is well attested already in the eighth century, in texts that only recently have received the attention that they deserve.

The basic text is paragraph 16, 2 of the Isaurian *Ecloga*,[30] the information of which is partly confirmed by a judicial decision attributable to Leo III or Constantine V.[31] The first text has been successfully interpreted;[32] the second has been brought into the discussion recently.[33]

The *Ecloga* paragraph, contained in a chapter concerning the *peculium castrense*, examines what happens when two (or more) brothers inherit the paternal estate (or household: *oikos*[34]) and one of

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[28] This distinction between the soldiers' holdings is repeated — with different tariffs — in *De Cerimoniis*, 695: the horsemen should have a property of five pounds, while the *"stratiotes"* of the imperial *ploïmon* (the word *stratiotes* here cannot but indicate the holder of a *strateia*, i.e., a reservist serving in the imperial *ploïmon*) should have only three pounds worth of real estate.

[29] Other tenth and eleventh-century texts proving the above statement are discussed by Haldon, *Recruitment*, 47, 57-58.

[30] *Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III und Konstantinos V.*, ed. L. Burgmann (Frankfurt 1983) [Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte, 10] 10-12 (our text is to be found on pages 220-222). A first, unsuccessful, attempt at commenting upon this text was made by J. Mossay and P. Yannopoulos, "L'article XVI, 2 de l'Éclogue des Isauriens et la situation des soldats," *Byzantion* 46/1 (1976) 48-57.

[31] D. Simon, "Byzantinische Hausgemeinschaftsverträge," *Beiträge zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte und zum geltenden Zivilrecht. Festgabe für J. Sontis* (München 1977) 94.

[32] Haldon, *Recruitment*, 67 ff.

[33] R.-J. Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," *Byzantinoslavica* 45 (1984) 196-197. Lilie repeats Haldon's interpretation but seems to express reservations about it.

[34] In this context, the term *oikos*, indicating a unit producing revenue thanks to the toil (καμάτων) of those holding it, cannot be a house. Haldon translates dutifully as "household" but I am tempted to go a little bit further and translate by "estate," keeping in mind the meaning of the term *oikos* in Byzantine Egypt (cf. J. Gascou, "Les grands domaines, la cité et l'état en Egypte byzantine," *Travaux et Mémoires* 9, 1985, 1-90) and in tenth and eleventh-century documents, in which it is often related to the military: στρατιωτικὸς οἶκος (cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, s.v. *oikos*;

them joins the army (στρατευθῇ), while living in it together with his sibling. Difficulties can be avoided if the brothers make an agreement which the law explicitly recognises. But what if there is no such agreement and after some time the brothers want to divide their properties? According to the Roman legal tradition, the inheritance is divided in equal parts among brothers. But in the case under consideration we have one of them, who lived on the estate but worked less on it, and who had some extra revenues (above all, his salary, ῥόγα) and some extra expenses (above all, his military equipment). What would be a fair sharing formula?

In a postscript (16, 2, 2), the legislator explains clearly what are the objects that the soldier will keep for himself independently of the way in which the rest of the property will be divided: he keeps whatever he may have received as booty or as a gratuity *(philotimia)* from his superiors, provided that he still has in his possession the object itself — that is, he cannot claim any compensation for objects that fall in the above categories and which have in the meantime disappeared, having been destroyed or used up. These items can be considered as "honorific" revenues of the soldier, obtained because he distinguished himself at war; consequently, they are reserved for him only, apart from the rest of the family properties that he will share with his brothers.

For the rest of the properties, three possibilities are taken into consideration, depending upon the length of time during which the soldier has lived together with his brother(s) on the family estate:

(a)   Up to ten years: all properties are shared equally; as it will appear from the following paragraph, this obviously includes the soldier's equipment, which presumably will have to be evaluated and counted in the soldier's share, thus diminishing his part of the rest of the property.

(b)   Between ten and thirteen years: the soldier, who is expected in the meantime to have acquired not only his basic weaponry, but also a cuirass, has the right to keep for himself his typically military equipment (battle-horse and harness, weapons, cuirass), but nothing beyond it. This means that all the rest of his equipment, even if used

and *Actes d'Iviron*, ed. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou I [Paris 1985] 112).

for military purposes, will be considered as part of the family property to be divided in equal shares among the brothers.

(c) After the thirteenth year: the soldier is entitled to keep for himself his basic equipment, plus whatever objects he may have acquired (with salaries received after the thirteenth year) and which still exist at the time of the sharing of property (here again he cannot claim compensation for objects that have disappeared in the meantime).

Presumably the legislator introduced this case in a code of law, because it represented a rather common situation in his time. The soldier described here belongs to the light cavalry — he is the average Byzantine soldier of the period, similar to the one described in the Life of St. Philaretos in the late eighth century. His military equipment has not been given to him by the State; it is considered to have been acquired with the common revenues of the *oikos*, and for this reason, during the first ten years, it is part of the family property to share. But the soldier also receives a salary; its amount is not known to us, nor is the frequency with which it was paid, although the figures mentioned allow us to suspect a three-year cycle of payment, the same as in Ibn Khurdadbih.[35] Be that as it may, it is clear that, according to the legislator, ten years of this salary (or, rather, four years of paid service within a ten year period), with the important advantages that it provided to a peasant household chronically short of cash, would constitute a compensation high enough to make up for the military equipment, which from then on becomes the separate property of the soldier. After the thirteenth year, the soldier is further authorized to keep for himself all savings that he can make on his salary (and definitely not the consumption goods that he may have acquired and used up over the years).

It is true that the expression "military land" does not appear anywhere in this text; it is also true that nowhere is there any hint that the estates concerned had any particular status because one brother joined the military — but we know that the military lands obtained a

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[35] During the ten first years, one expects four payments of *roga*, on year one of the enrolment, plus three subsequent *rogai* (at the latest on the fourth, seventh and tenth years, according to the three-year cycle). One more salary would certainly be paid before the thirteenth year, which is the next milestone mentioned by the legislator. But of course, all this is a simple indication and cannot be considered as secure.

special status only in the tenth century and that, until then, they were part of the average small land holdings that existed all over the empire. But, as Haldon has stressed, the actual situation described in the *Ecloga* text is very close to the one that modern historians usually attribute to a military holding.

1. The soldier is living with his brother(s) on the family estate and draws revenues for his subsistence and for acquiring his military equipment. The sheer fact that this expensive equipment was the personal property of the soldier — consequently transmittable by way of inheritance — may have been a major reason for military service in the provinces becoming hereditary.

2. Although this is not clearly said, the soldier participates in the agricultural activities, at least on a part-time basis. The expression ἀπὸ καμάτων τοῦ κοινοῦ αὐτῶν οἴκου, i.e., of the soldier and of his brother, hints at work done in common by the two brothers, especially when read in conjunction with the phrase that follows and which attributes all initiatives of the farming enterprise (presumably such things as planting vines, building mills, etc.) to the brother who works full time in it (καὶ σπουδῆς τοῦ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μείναντος ἀδελφοῦ).[36]

3. Beyond his personal work (interrupted by his military duties), the soldier contributes his salary to the household economy. Nothing is said of food rations that he would bring in — undoubtedly because his subsistence was assured from the revenues of the estate.

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[36] Mossay-Yannopoulos 52, quote *Ecloga* 12, 6 in order to say that any lucrative activities were forbidden to soldiers, implying thus that agricultural activities were also forbidden. This is not the case: *Ecloga* 12, 6 forbids soldiers undertaking such activities on behalf of others (long term renting; or becoming the supervisor of someone else's estates). The prohibition of agricultural activities to soldiers clearly exists in the Justinianic legislation (*C.J.* XII, 35, 15), which has been repeated in the Byzantine Mutiny Act that some authors date to the seventh-ninth centuries (cf. Lemerle, *Agrarian History*, 60-61). But this date is by no means secure; and even if it were accepted, one could always explain the reproduction of this clause by the fact that the legislator had in mind the professional mercenaries of the Constantinopolitan army. Similar reservations as to the soldiers' agricultural activities have been expressed by Lilie, *loc. cit.*, on the fragile grounds that the soldier had to be occupied full time by his military service all summers and, consequently, would not have the time to work on the land.

4. Nothing is said about the fiscal status of the estate: was it exempt from secondary taxes and corvées as the military lands are known to have been in the tenth century? The point is beyond the legislator's scope and is not raised at all. Yet this hypothesis is not unrealistic.

This image is confirmed in its general lines by the decision of Leo III and Constantine V, mentioned supra (note 31). We have the case of a young man (a minor? this has been supposed but is not certain), who enters an *oikos* as a γαμβρός (i.e., as husband — or future husband — of one daughter of the household) and who is a soldier. He contributes to the household economy his salary and his personal work: περὶ γαμβρῶν στρατιωτῶν εἰσερχομένων εἰς οἴκους εἰσφερόντων ῥόγας αὐτῶν καὶ καμάτους ποιούντων. Now, if the marriage arrangement falls through, the soldier would be entitled to take back all gratuity and booty (ἀπὸ βασιλικῶν δωρημάτων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ σπαθίου αὐτοῦ) as well as salary (ῥόγα) while his former father-in-law would have the right to claim whatever outlay he made for him: for his armament (στρατιωτικὴν ἐξόπλισιν), for his expenses (δαπάνην) and for his clothing (φορεσίαν) i.e., all sizeable investments (one has to stress, though, that this text does not necessarily imply that *all* armament and clothing were paid for by the father-in-law; the soldier might well have had some weapons when he entered the *oikos* and then have acquired some more with the financial help of his father-in-law; armament was bought piecemeal, as is also said in *Ecloga* 16, 2, and of course, suffered wear and tear and had to be replaced). Here again we have an *oikos*. As the "soldier" was working on the land (that belonged to his father-in-law) and maybe brought fiscal advantages to it, he is not requested to reimburse anything for his maintenance, and he is entitled to take back the cash that he brought in. On the other hand, the *oikos* had to invest in his equipment and clothing, as has been seen above. The main difference between this text and *Ecloga* 16, 2 is that in this text the soldier has no rights of property on the *oikos*, while in *Ecloga* 16, 2 he is a co-owner from inheritance.

What we learn from both the above eighth-century texts is very similar to what is said in the Tactics of Leo VI: the soldier should be able to attend to his military duties (στρατεία), when there is an expedition or call-up, and have others who would cultivate (γεωργοῦντας) his estates (ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις οἴκοις) and would supply what is

necessary for equipping and arming the soldier, while the estates would remain free from all other fiscal obligations (δημοσίου δουλειῶν).[37] No scholar has ever doubted that this text of Leo refers to real military holdings.

If the soldier-farmer, who received a salary at least when mobilized,[38] is mentioned in a code of law of the first half of the eighth century, we have to assume that the institution was by then common — consequently that it was created quite some time earlier. How much earlier, is open to speculation. But this does bring us very close to Heraclius and his successors, who have been considered as the initiators of the theme system by several modern authorities and by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos himself.

A last but basic question on this subject is to establish when the military service of a soldier-farmer was seen as a fiscal obligation (that could be replaced by payments in cash) for him and for his successors, even if these were physically unable to perform their actual military duties. It seems obvious to me that this conception of military service would have been possible only if the obligation was attached to the soldier's property that passed to his successors. The well-known case described in the Life of St. Euthymios the Younger (first half of the ninth century) is very clear: the widow of a soldier enrolls her young son in the army in order to avoid heavy payments.[39] But we can now say that this situation was common well before that time. In a letter that he addressed to Empress Irene glorifying her for the tax alleviations that she granted in March 801, Theodore Studites writes,

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[37] A similar image is given by the treatise *De Velitatione Bellica*, in which a clear distinction is made between the active soldiers and the *"stratiotai"* (holders of military lands) who serve them. See the remarks of Haldon, *Recruitment*, 60, note 104 and the text in G. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C. 1985) 216.

[38] By now, it must be clear that the soldier-farmers received a *roga*; consequently, the payment of such salaries to the army by Heraclius does not by any means prove that this army was recruited without taking into consideration the soldiers' landed properties. This point of view has been expressed by W. Kaegi, "Late Roman Continuity in the Financing of Heraclius' Army," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/2 (1982) 53-61 and again in the first part of his "Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982) 87-113. See also the remarks of Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden 1984) 229-230.

[39] See supra, footnote 23.

among other things: Αἱ στρατιώτιδες τὸ οἰκεῖον πένθος ἔχουσαι
τῆς ἀνδρικῆς ἀποβολῆς, οὐκ ἐπιθρηνήσουσιν τὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ θανέντος
ἐλεεινὴν καὶ ἀπάνθρωπον ἐξαπαίτησιν: the wives of soldiers, having
their own sorrow from the loss of their husbands, will not have to
lament in addition for the pitiful and inhuman exaction (imposed
upon them) because of the deceased (husband).[40] Until 801 the widow
had to pay for the service that she was unable to provide herself. This
obligation was temporarily abolished by Irene and probably rein-
stated by her successor Nikephoros I, as we find it in the Life of St.
Euthymios.

   This text shows beyond any doubt that this was a practice
quite common by the end of the eighth century. Of course, it does not
state how old this practice was. Theodore declares that Irene abolished
several unjust exactions that her predecessors had omitted (λαθοῦσα)
to correct, "although some of them had reigned in an orthodox
fashion" (καίπερ τινὰς εὐσεβῶς βεβασιλευκότας).[41] No Isaurian
emperor could ever be called an "orthodox" by Theodore Studites.
Consequently, the taxes and obligations revoked by Irene, or at
least some of them, were introduced before 717. Although it is im-
possible to assert that this was true for *all* the taxes and obligations
enumerated in this letter, it is possible to hypothesize that such prac-
tices concerning the soldier-farmers may well have existed from the
time that the institution made its appearance. After all, Byzantium
had always applied the Roman legislation and recognized the right
to private property. When someone was enrolled in the army on the
basis of real estate, which for this reason benefitted from tax allevi-
ations, his successors who would inherit his privileged properties
would normally· also inherit his obligations toward the State. This
was certainly the case in the second half of the eighth century, and
probably much earlier.

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[40] Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 99, 932 D.
[41] *Ibid.*, 932 B.

# [7]

## THE BYZANTINE ARMY AND THE LAND:
## FROM *STRATIOTIKON KTEMA* TO MILITARY *PRONOIA*

### PAUL MAGDALINO

Throughout its long history, the Byzantine Empire, with its monetary economy, was normally able to pay its soldiers cash wages when they were on campaign. However, the government did not normally pay for their equipment, or look after them when they were not on active service. It was therefore up to them to support themselves on a regular basis from the rural economy. There were basically two ways open to them. They could either live *on* the land, as integral members of the farming population, or they could live *off* the land, as beneficiaries of the dues and services which the peasant producers owed to the state. The two modes must always have co-existed to some extent, and they may even have coincided in the case of many a cavalry soldier conscripted from a rural community, but there can be no doubt that the period covered by this volume saw a shift from the first, «contributory» mode of support to the second, «tributary» mode, a shift represented by the two institutions which figure in the title of this paper. The beginning of the process is marked by the Novel of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus which defines the minimum values of military landholdings (στρα-τιωτικὰ κτήματα), that is properties carrying the obligation of military service (*strateia*), and stipulates that the property was not transferable without the obligation[1]. The end of the process is marked, two hundred years later, in the reign of Manuel I, by the widespread allocation of state lands to the «care» (*pronoia*) of soldiers who were thus entitled to collect the dues and services which the tenant-farmers, the *paroikoi*, owed to the fisc[2].

The genesis of the *stratiotikon ktema* and the maturity of the military *pronoia* are subjects which lie outside the chronological bounds of this volume, and both institutions have in any case been well studied in their own right. But the transition from the one to the other is directly relevant to the study of Byzantium at war from

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1. I. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 222-226; ed. N. Svoronos, rev. P. Gounaridis, *Les novelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes: introduction, édition, commentaires*, Athens 1994, pp. 104-126, with references to earlier editions.

2. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten, I, Berlin-New York 1975, pp. 208-209.

the ninth to the eleventh century, and although the course of development is fairly clear, the links in the chain are still imperfectly understood[3].

In this paper, I shall focus in some detail on two particular links in the chain, from the tenth and eleventh centuries respectively. The first is the Novel, attributed to the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, tripling the minimum value of the military landholding required to support a mounted warrior. I shall argue, against the recent hypothesis of Taxiarchis Kolias, that the attribution of the Novel is genuine, but I shall also use some of Kolias' far from negligible arguments to suggest a new reading of this text. In second place, I shall consider the integration of one particular company of foreign mercenaries, the Normans, into the imperial army in the mid eleventh century, looking especially at the basis of their settlement in the theme of the Armeniakoi in north-central Asia Minor. This will lead, in conclusion, to a brief reconsideration of the origins of the *pronoia* system.

### The Novel of Nikephoros II Phokas

All printed collections of middle Byzantine legislation, from Leunclavius to Svoronos' posthumous edition of the imperial land legislation, include under the name of the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas a short text concerning the sale of lands by landowners subject to military service[4]. The text, which is undated, is in the form of a rescript drafted in response to a problem referred to the emperor by the master of petitions, the *protospatharios* Basil. The problem was that property sold by men in military service was being restored to them without the refund of the purchase price, regardless of the size of their fortune. The ruling is in two parts, the first with retrospective application to transfers that have already taken place, and the second to apply in future. In respect of past transactions, a soldier had the pre-emptive right to reclaim land that he had sold, but had to repay the purchase price if this land was not part of his military holding valued at 4lb of gold. For the future, however, the legislator rules that «since there has been an increase in *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi*» (ἐπεὶ τὰ τῶν κλιβανοφόρων καὶ τῶν ἐπιλωρικοφόρων κίνησιν ἔλαβε), the minimum value of a military holding is henceforth raised to 12lb, and any land alienated from such a property may be recovered without compensation.

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3. For a sound and comprehensive survey of recent scholarship, see J. F. Haldon, «Military Service, Military Lands, and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), pp. 1-67, along with two important articles by J.-C. Cheynet: «La politique militaire byzantine de Basile II à Alexis Comnène», *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 29-30 (1991), pp. 61-73; «Les effectifs de l'armée byzantine aux Xe-XIIe s.», *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 38 (1995), pp. 319-35.

4. *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 255-256; ed. Svoronos-Gounaridis, pp. 173-176.

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Most Byzantinists have been inclined to take this text on trust, and to treat it as evidence that Nikephoros raised the financial and social status of the mounted soldier, who now had to be able to afford heavier and more expensive armour –thus was the reference to *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* explained. However, Taxiarchis Kolias has very recently challenged this consensus in a monograph on Nikephoros II which is, in effect, a massive assault on the credibility of this one document[5]. As Kolias points out, it is full of oddities. It does not form part of the dossier of tenth-century legislation transmitted in the appendix to the Synopsis Maior of the *Basilica*. Indeed, its manuscript tradition was a secret which Leunclavius took with him to the grave, later editors –Zachariä, Zepos, and Svoronos– being content merely to reproduce his printed text. Kolias located one manuscript of the text in Vienna, Vind. jur. gr. 4, of the sixteenth century[6], and the thirteenth-century manuscript from which this was copied has since been identified in codex Vind. phil. gr. 23[7]. The text in both manuscripts includes the important rubric, missing from earlier editions, attributing the document to «The holy emperor Nikephoros» –clearly an allusion to Nikephoros II. Yet Kolias' discovery did not dispose him to regard the text any less sceptically. He draws attention to serious structural problems. Its declared purpose is ambiguous. Was it to make it easier for soldiers to sell their property, or to ensure fair compensation for those who bought from them? Either way, the second part of the proposed solution appears to defeat the purpose. Kolias adduces weighty arguments to prove (1) that neither military technology nor the economic situation changed in such a way as to warrant a threefold increase in military landholdings, (2) that there was not enough land to allow such an increase, and (3) that other sources contain no echo of the upheaval that such an increase would surely have caused. In conclusion, he invites the reader to choose between three alternative solutions: the Novel is a forgery; the Novel is a collage of excerpts from other legislative texts; the Novel was issued by another emperor Nikephoros, namely Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081), who ruled at a time of galloping inflation, and who was therefore concerned to bring the assessed value of military holdings in line with the real value of the debased *nomisma*.

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5. T. G. Kolias, *Νικηφόρος Β´ Φωκᾶς (963-969). Ὁ στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ καὶ τὸ μεταρρυθ-μιστικὸ του ἔργο*, Athens 1993.

6. See *ibid.*, pp. 98-99, for an edition of the text.

7. See L. Burgmann in *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 13 (1994), pp. 477-478; *Repertorium der Handschriften des byzantinischen Rechts*, I: *Die Handschriften des weltlichen Rechts*, ed. L. Burgmann, M. Th. Fögen, A. Schminck, D. Simon, Frankfurt 1995, no. 322, p. 368.

To take these solutions in turn, the hypothesis of a forgery and the hypothesis of a collage are seriously weakened by the lack of what every prosecutor needs: a motive for the crime. Until one is produced there is not much point in discussing the possibilities. The attribution to Nikephoros Botaneiates is at first sight more attractive because the argument from monetary debasement is quite neat. However, the text does not otherwise fit the context of the 1070s. On the available evidence, late eleventh-century legislators were not interested in military holdings, which by this time represented an insignificant element in the state's military budget. They were much more interested in the procedures of civil litigation and in demonstrating their philanthropy, especially to the church and people of Constantinople[8]. Moreover, they were served by clever and learned lawyers who would surely have come up with something more elegantly and professionally drafted. It is unlikely that an *epi tôn deeseôn* would have been a mere *protospatharios* under Botaneiates, in whose time court titles, like the currency, inflated out of control[9]. Most importantly, if the point of tripling the value of a military property was to keep pace with inflation, why does the legislator not say so, instead of explaining this measure by «an increase in *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi*»?

On the other hand, the text does demonstrably fit the context of the 960s. The tenth century saw intense military activity coupled with unprecedented movement in the land market. As the empire went on the offensive in Asia Minor, the central cavalry units, the *tagmata*, gained in importance as a mobile expeditionary force. As the eastern provinces became more secure from invasion, and as booty, captives and conquered lands accumulated, new opportunities and incentives opened up for investment in agricultural land. The situation, and the government's response to it, evolved rapidly. The emperor Leo VI, in his military manual, the *Taktika*, inaugurated a more systematic and dogmatic approach to military reform[10]. A generation later, Romanos I initiated a radical and aggressive strategy for the protection and the expansion of the state's fiscal base which continued into the

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8. See L. Burgmann, «A law for emperors: observations on a chrysobull of Nikephoros III Botaneiates», *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, ed. P. Magdalino, Aldershot 1994, pp. 247-257; Idem, «Lawyers and legislators: aspects of law-making in the time of Alexios I», *Alexios I Komnenos*, I: *Papers*, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smythe, Belfast 1996, pp. 185-198.

9. J.-C. Cheynet, «Dévaluation des dignités et dévaluation monétaire dans la seconde moitié du XIe siècle», *Byzantion* 53 (1983), pp. 453-477.

10. See G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De Velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*, Paris 1986, pp. 139-160.

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twelfth century[11]. His Novels imposing restrictions on the purchase of peasant landholdings by the «powerful» were interventionist as well as protective measures, which effectively secured for the state a quasi-proprietary right over a vast category of private property[12]. A Novel of Constantine VII extended this right to another category of land, the landholdings of the theme soldiers[13]. The novelty of this policy needs stressing. Although the Novel justifies its provisions as the confirmation of custom, it was a significant innovation in the Roman law of property[14]. By formally defining soldiers' property as *stratiotika ktemata*, the Novel was effectively revoking their private status, and by attaching the burden of military service, the *strateia*, to land rather than to the families who owned it, the Novel opened the way for the fiscalisation of the *strateia*, the commutation of the service obligation to a tax. In other words, the Novel had implications both for private litigation and for government policy, which, whether foreseen or unforeseen, were likely to require further legislation. Accordingly the emperor Romanos II was prompted to issue an edict in March 962 regulating the liability of those who had acquired military property in contravention of his father's Novel, and who had taken indigent soldiers into their service[15]. The text with which we are concerned also begins by addressing the problem of liability and compensation, and it deals with an aspect of the problem which had not been precisely settled by Romanos. Its attribution to Romanos' successor, Nikephoros II, therefore makes complete sense.

Beyond that, Nikephoros was strongly committed to maintaining and enhancing the economic well-being and the privileged fiscal status of soldiers within society. The commitment was something of a Phokas family tradition. Nikephoros' grandfather and namesake had certainly influenced the military thinking of Leo VI[16], whose *Taktika* had raised the question of soldiers' prosperity[17], and his father, Bardas Phokas, had stood high in the favour of Constantine VII[18], who had

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11. Cf. P. Magdalino, «Justice and Finance in the Byzantine State, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries», *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and D. Simon, Washington, D.C. 1994, pp. 93-115, esp. pp. 102-105; J. D. Howard-Johnston, «Crown Lands and the Defence of Imperial Authority in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries», *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995), pp. 75-100, esp. p. 86ff.

12. *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 198-204, 205-214; ed. Svoronos-Gounaridis, pp. 47-92.

13. See above, n.1; Haldon, «Military Service», p. 29ff.

14. D. Górecki, «The Strateia of Constantine VII: The Legal Status, Administration, and Historical Background», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 82 (1989), pp. 157-176.

15. *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 243-244; ed. Svoronos-Gounaridis, pp. 142-150.

16. Leo, *Tactica*, XI.25-6, XV.38, XVII.83; Dagron-Mihăescu, *Traité*, pp. 165-169.

17. Leo, *Tactica*, IV.1, XX.71.

18. See J.-C. Cheynet in Dagron-Mihăescu, *Traité*, pp. 297-299.

legislated to protect military holdings. Nikephoros himself almost certainly wrote or commissioned the treatise *On guerilla warfare*, which contains an impassioned plea for soldiers to receive regular wages and allowances and generous bonuses, and, «most important of all, to enjoy the complete tax-exemption which has been granted to them from the beginning, as enjoined by the holy and blessed emperors of old in their tactical books» –a clear, if distorted, allusion to the *Taktika* of Leo VI[19]. Nikephoros clearly took his militarism much further than his father and grandfather[20]. The emperor notoriously spared no effort or resources to improve the size and the morale of the armed forces, and made himself very unpopular with the civilian population by making them pay the extra cost of his grand expeditions to the east. On this point, all the sources are agreed. Two in particular state that the emperor greatly enlarged the fiscal base for financing the recruitment and maintenance of armed warriors. Zonaras, a twelfth-century author who is generally well informed about earlier periods, has this to say:

> While he reigned there was no relief from the tax-inspectors, surveyors, conscriptors (στρατευταί), and the so-called protonotaries, who oppressed the subject populations with all kinds of afflictions and drove them into utter poverty, not even sparing the completely destitute, but they registered these in the postal service. The people who were formerly subjected to this they re-registered in the naval lists, converting the naval conscripts into footsoldiers, while those who had previously been such they enrolled among the cavalry, changing the cavalrymen into armoured knights. They imposed on each a heavier military duty, for it seemed as if Nikephoros was conscripting the whole universe for military service[21].

The other source is the contemporary Arab geographer Ibn Hauqal, who says that Nikephoros financed his campaigns against the Muslims as follows:

> From every moderately well-off household of a man possessing servants, different kinds of livestock, pasture and cultivated land, the emperor took an average levy of 10 dinars. Those of superior wealth and status had to contribute an armed warrior complete with weapons, horses and squires, together with 30

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19. *De velitatione*, XIX.5-9, ed. Dagron-Mihăescu, *Traité*, pp. 108-111 (text), p. 264ff (commentary); also ed. with English translation by G. T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, Washington, D.C. 1985, pp. 214-217.

20. Dagron-Mihăescu, pp. 274-287; see also R. Morris, «The two faces of Nikephoros Phokas», *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988), pp. 83-115.

21. John Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum*, ed. M. Pinder and M. Büttner-Wobst, III, Bonn 1897, pp. 505-506.

dinars for his upkeep. This was how Nikephoros organised his expeditions against the Muslims – he did not spend from his treasury or draw on his own fortune[22].

Apart from their general agreement that Nikephoros imposed burdensome contributions in order to finance an increased military budget, these very different accounts both echo each other and the text with which we are concerned in one major particular. All three refer to two levels of contribution at the top of the scale: Zonaras to the provision of a simple cavalryman and a heavily-armed cataphract, Ibn Hauqal to a payment of 10 dinars and the provision of a cataphract plus 30 dinars, and the Novel to military properties valued at 4lb and 12lb of gold respectively. The fact that both Ibn Hauqal and the Novel define these levels in terms of a ratio of three to one is certainly striking and surely significant[23].

These connections, which form a plausible context for the Novel attributed to Nikephoros II, were perfectly well known to scholars before Kolias disputed the attribution. We must now turn to the substance of his objections. His scepticism is based on three problems posed by the text. The first and most crucial is the meaning of the clause in which the legislator explains his reason for tripling the minimum value of a property held in return for military service. All modern scholars who have dealt with the text, including Kolias, have assumed that the *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* are the elite cavalry troops –in other words, these terms are taken to be the equivalent of *kataphraktos* or *siderophraktos*. But the assumption is hazardous, given that, as Kolias points out, the words occur nowhere else in Byzantine sources. This is an important observation, and it is unfortunate that Kolias failed to follow it up. For further reflection reveals the absurdity of the idea that *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* are cataphracts. A *klibanion* is a suit of lamellated or plated body armour and an *epilorikon* is a surcoat[24]. Are we really to believe that there was one type of cataphract who wore body armour but no surcoat, and another type wore a surcoat without armour[25]? Or are we to suppose

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22. Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la terre (Kitab surat al-ard)*, tr. J. H. Kramers and G. Wiet, I, Paris 1964, p. 194.

23. As noted by P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin*, Paris 1977, p. 266.

24. See T. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung*, Vienna 1988, pp. 44-45, 58-61; J. F. Haldon, *Three Treatises on Imperial Expeditions*, *CFHB* 28, Vienna 1991, pp. 277-279.

25. In the *Praecepta militaria*, III.4, Nikephoros Phokas expressly states that a *kataphraktos* must wear both types of protective covering: ed. and tr. E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*, Washington, D.C. 1995, pp. 34-35: ἕκαστον ἄνδρα μαχητὴν φορεῖν κλιβάνιον ... καὶ ἔξωθεν τῶν κλιβανίων φορεῖν ἐπιλώρικα μετὰ κουκουλίου καὶ βαμβακίου ... .

that the author of our eminently prosaic text was moved to poetic variation in this one line? I suggest we look for another explanation. The suffix *-phoros* can designate not only a wearer but a bearer of something. *Klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* can therefore plausibly be identified as armour bearers and surcoat bearers. In other words, what the Novel refers to is an increase in the number of squires in the service of the elite cavalry troops, which meant that each warrior would normally have to provide for *two* orderlies accompanying him on campaign. Such an increase might have been due to the introduction of heavier armour. If the soldier was equipped with an *epilorikion*, this implies that he wore a *lorikion* as well as a *klibanion*. But it is more likely to have been occasioned, firstly, by concern on the part of generals like Nikephoros Phokas to ensure that their elite troops were in prime condition for campaigns that were becoming increasingly longer and more ambitious, and, secondly, by the greater availability of manpower following the influx of Saracen prisoners of war[26].

If this interpretation of the mysterious *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* is correct, it provides a plausible explanation for the stipulated increase in the minimum value of a military holding. The increased valuation of 12lb, which Kolias regards as wildly excessive, begins to appear less so when we consider that the property was meant to support three men, all probably with families and household slaves, at least one warhorse and at least two pack animals. Excessive or not, however, the increase was very steep, and one must agree with Kolias that it is hard to see how it worked in practice. The other sources are not much help, since both Zonaras and Ibn Hauqal seem to refer to fiscal impositions on civilians, whereas our text appears to be solely concerned with soldiers performing military service for their properties. However, once we accept that our text cannot be explained away as irrelevant to Nikephoros II, but that an explanation must be sought which fits the circumstances of his reign, we have to consider one or more of three possible solutions.

The first, suggested by Paul Lemerle, is that Nikephoros was deliberately fixing a high level of valuation which few soldier's properties were ever likely to attain, and which would therefore have the effect of tying the whole of a soldier's estate to military service, ending the distinction between his military and non-

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26. The social and economic impact of this influx is reflected in two contemporary documents: one, appended to the *Book of Ceremonies*, concerning the tax-relief offered to newly integrated Saracen captives, and the other a Novel of John I Tzimiskes granting exemption from *kommerkion* on sales or gifts of captives by the soldiers who had received them as war booty: *De cerimoniis*, ed. J. Reiske, p. 695; *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 257-258. Cf. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 365-368, for English translation and commentary, and also T. Kolias, «Kriegsgefangene, Sklavenhandel und die Privilegien der Soldaten», *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995), pp. 129-135.

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military holdings[27]. The emperor may also have been seeking to meet the threat to military holdings that was posed by partible inheritance: whether a *stratiotikon ktema* was held conjointly by heirs or divided among them, a 12lb property would suffer less quickly from diminishing shares than a 4lb. property, and in the case of division, each portion could perhaps be considered to be the nucleus of a new 12lb holding. In other words, the 12lb valuation simply gave the state an opportunity to classify more land as military. It may not be necessary to look any further for an explanation.

It is nevertheless tempting to seek a closer connection between the provisions of the Novel and the evidence of the other sources, all of which –Leo the Deacon and Skylitzes as well as Zonaras and Ibn Hauqal– stress the fiscal and monetary character of the emperor's impositions[28]. Is it not possible that Ibn Hauqal, Zonaras and our text are all referring to different aspects of the same policy: the fiscalisation of the *strateia* as a burden imposed on the non-military population[29]? Another solution to the problem posed by the Novel might be, then, to interpret this as a measure aimed not so much at tripling the amount of military land held by the actively-serving soldiers, but at tripling the contributions payable by much wealthier landowners who were worth at least 12lb and who were technically liable for some kind of *strateia*. In other words, the Novel was using the language of recent legislation on military properties to implement a rather different agenda, an agenda for exploiting the civilian property owner. Such an interpretation may seem tortuous, but the sources are agreed that Nikephoros went to unusual lengths. According to Leo the Deacon, «he invented taxes that had never yet been devised, saying that much money was needed for the military»[30]. According to Skylitzes, «he continually maltreated his subjects not only with all kinds of tax increases and other contributions, but also with unspeakable depredations»[31]. Skylitzes goes on to mention various measures which hit the church, concluding with the remark that Nikephoros «issued certain other ordinances (διατάγματα) exceeding any notion of necessity, which to relate in detail would require the mind and tongue of a great orator»[32]. Interestingly, Skylitzes makes this remark at the point in his narrative

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27. P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Galway 1979, pp. 128-131.

28. For Leo the Deacon and Skylitzes, see below, nn. 30-31.

29. Cf. Hélène Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, *Recherches sur l'administration de l'Empire byzantin aux IXᵉ-XIᵉ siècles*, Paris 1960, p. 16ff.

30. Ed. C. B. Hase, Bonn 1828, p. 64.

31. Ed. J. Thurn, Berlin-New York 1973, p. 274.

32. *Loc. cit.*

where Zonaras, when incorporating this narrative into his own chronicle, inserts his famous accusation that Nikephoros transformed everyone into soldiers.

But if the *strateia* envisaged by the Novel was essentially a fiscal charge, on whom was it meant to fall? Ultimately, any extra burden would be passed on to the peasantry. However, Zonaras and Ibn Hauqal give the impression that a much larger cross-section of society was affected. Zonaras implies, with some but not too much rhetorical exaggeration, that the whole of society was assessed for contributions; Ibn Hauqal states that the contributors at the top of the scale were very well off and were assessed at the rate of one mounted warrior per household unit. It took a very substantial property owner to raise 10 dinars for the support of a lightly armed cavalryman, and a much greater landed fortune was required to provide a heavily armed cataphract with squires, mounts and 30 dinars for expenses. It is tempting to equate these support units with the 4lb and 12lb military properties of our Novel. It is also hard to escape the conclusion that we are not looking at ordinary peasants, but at the lower ranks, at least, of the «powerful» Thus the «fiscal» interpretation of the Novel leads to the hypothesis that the revaluation of the military properties was part of an attempt to regularise a new, extraordinary levy on the hitherto untapped wealth of «powerful» civilians. Certainly, Nikephoros' bad reputation as an inventor of new and oppressive taxes is easier to understand if we suppose that his measures did not just hit the lowly rural taxpayer.

But if the fiscalised and revalued *strateia* bore heavily on wealthy civilians, it was a positive benefit to wealthy military men, not only because it generated more money for their pay, but also because the increased minimum value of a military holding improved the fiscal position of the actively serving, landowning soldier. This point has not been noted by modern scholars, but it seems to follow that the greater the proportion of an individual's land which was tied to military service, the smaller was his liability for the extraordinary levies and corvées from which military property was exempt. Moreover, as we have seen, Nikephoros Phokas was strongly of the opinion, expressed in the *Treatise on Guerilla Warfare*, that all soldiers should be exempt from all taxes. There may thus be some merit in the interpretation of our Novel by Ostrogorsky, who saw it primarily as a measure by an aristocratic, military emperor designed to raise the economic and social status of the elite cavalry troops[33]. Indeed, if I am right in identifying the *klibanophoroi* and *epilorikophoroi* as squires, the Novel explicitly sets out to bring a soldier's official economic status in line with the reality of his social elevation, which allowed him to ride into battle with an entourage. Such an entourage is envisaged by the *Treatise*

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33. G. Ostrogorsky, tr. J. Hussey, *History of the Byzantine State*, Oxford 1968, pp. 286-287.

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*on Guerilla Warfare*, which recommends that tax exemption for soldiers should extend to *those who serve them*[34]. Both texts clearly envisage not a soldier on the brink of destitution, but a soldier with other soldiers in his service, a soldier who looked much more like the «powerful» titled officer who commanded him rather than the «poor» peasant who worked to maintain him. In short, we are dealing with privileged and upwardly mobile individuals, their mobility accelerated by the spoils and prestige of victorious campaigns, who effectively made nonsense of the distinction drawn by tenth-century legislators (including Nikephoros himself) between soldiers and «powerful» as separate categories of landowners. So we may suspect that Nikephoros' Novel actually worked to the advantage of soldiers who had recently become *dynatoi*, or of military *dynatoi* of long standing.

To recapitulate, the three solutions to the problem posed by the Novel are as follows. Solution 1 is to interpret it as an extension of the earlier legislation concerning *stratiotika ktemata* that followed the essentially protective spirit of that legislation. The other two would both regard it as an attempt to use the institution of military property as an instrument for extending the military sector of the state, either by imposing commuted military service as a fiscal obligation on non-military landowners (solution 2), or by raising the social and economic status of the soldiers themselves (solution 3).

I shall not attempt to choose between these solutions, because they are not mutually exclusive, and all are equally representative of what we know of Nikephoros' thinking. To exclude any one of them would be to ascribe too much care and forethought to a document that looks very much like a hasty and opportunistic reflex. It is more than a straightforward response to the practical problem which was brought to the emperor's attention. However, as a vehicle for turning the issue to the state's advantage it is poorly thought-out and framed. Its terse, unpolished style suggests ad hoc dictation by the emperor rather than careful drafting by bureaucratic policy-advisers. Its absence from the dossier appended to the *Synopsis maior Basilicorum*, and the lack of subsequent reference to it, suggests that later legislators and lawyers did not treat it seriously. Perhaps it was felt to be too closely associated with the most unpopular policies of a controversial emperor. Or perhaps it was too closely associated with a passing moment in a rapidly evolving process. If its intention, or its effect, was to favour the growth of a land-based military aristocracy it would have been anathema to Basil II, and if it was aimed at extending the fiscalisation of military obligations, its emphasis on the

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34. *De velitatione*, XIX.5, ed. Dagron-Mihǎescu, p. 109: τὸ τελείαν ἔχειν ἐλευθερίαν τὰς ἑαυτῶν οἰκίας καὶ τῶν ὑπηρετουμένων αὐτοῖς στρατιωτῶν καὶ τοὺς περὶ αὐτοὺς ἅπαντας; cf. commentary, *ibid.*, pp. 267-269.

military holding as the unit of assessment did not have a future. Basil II was no less concerned than Nikephoros II to protect and augment the army's fiscal base, and tacitly endorsed earlier legislation forbidding the alienation of military holdings, which as an institution survived into the eleventh century[35]. However, Basil's famous Novel of 996 does not specifically refer to any of this legislation, as opposed to the earlier Novel of Romanos I, which is its only point of reference, and Basil correspondingly does not distinguish military land from other categories of land that had been illegally acquired by the *dynatoi*[36]. All that we know about Basil suggests that this reflected a real change in priorities. There is evidence that he took every opportunity to bring large tracts of land under the direct ownership of the fisc[37]. At the same time, Basil had every reason to discourage the close relationship between the army and the land which had produced powerful military magnate families like those of Phokas, Skleros and Kourkouas. For almost thirty years the power of these families threatened to exclude him and his dynasty from the throne, first in the reigns of Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes, and then in the rebellions of Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros. It was in order to combat Bardas Phokas that Basil engaged the services of six thousand Rus soldiers supplied by Prince Vladimir of Kiev[38]. He thus inaugurated the steady recruitment of foreign troops which, by the end of the eleventh century, transformed the Byzantine field army into a largely foreign mercenary force. This brings us to the second moment on which we have chosen to focus.

### The Normans in the Armeniakon

Although foreigners had served in the empire's armed forces since the fourth century, they had ceased from the seventh century to constitute large, permanent units of a distinct ethnic character. Whether or not Basil II was conscious of reverting to late antique practice, his formation of a *tagma* of Rus soldiers marked a departure from imperial policy of the past three hundred years. The ethnic balance of the Byzantine army was not immediately affected, and Basil's precedent was not followed until the middle of the century. It is no accident, however, that the emperor who did so, Constantine IX Monomachos, was the first emperor since

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35. Haldon, «Military Service», pp. 60-61.

36. *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 262-272; ed. Svoronos-Gounaridis, pp. 190-217. Cf. M. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle*, Paris 1992, p. 437ff.

37. N. Oikonomides, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin au XIe siècle (1025-1118)», *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), pp. 136-137; Magdalino, «Justice and Finance», p. 105.

38. Stephen Asolik of Taron, tr. F. Macler, *Histoire universelle*, Paris 1917, p. 164.

Basil to face a full-scale military rebellion which nearly cost him his throne. We may note, in passing, that the recruitment of foreigners was not initiated by the inadequacy of native troops, or by an external threat to the empire's frontiers, but was directly related to the emperor's inability to trust his leading military commanders.

Constantine Monomachos employed Pecheneg, Turkish and Arab forces, though possibly not on a regular basis. More importantly, however, the regular employment of Frankish – i.e. mainly Norman – mercenaries in the imperial forces dates from his reign. The subject has recently been treated by Jonathan Shepard in an excellent article, which joins the recent studies by Jean-Claude Cheynet in disposing of the notion that the employment of mercenaries caused the collapse of the Byzantine war effort in the eleventh century[39]. Apart from laying out the evidence with admirable thoroughness, Shepard makes several important observations. Firstly, he points out that the first mentions of «Franks» serving in the Balkans and Asia Minor relate to events of the late 1040s and early 1050s, and he connects this service with Constantine IX's recruitment of forces from the west and the north to combat the rebellion of Leo Tornikes in 1047. Secondly, he distinguishes foreigners who served the empire as *symmachoi*, i.e. soldiers supplied under the terms of an alliance with a friendly ruler, from foreign mercenaries, *misthophoroi*, who offered their services for hire, and he plausibly concludes that the Franks were the first body of foreigners in the eleventh century to be recruited in this strictly «mercenary» capacity. Thirdly, he suggests that despite the bad reputation which they have acquired in the secondary literature, the Franks served the empire well as long as they were properly paid.

Shepard also calls attention to the fact that the Normans in imperial service in the mid eleventh century were mainly based in a particular province, the theme of the Armeniakoi (τῶν Ἀρμενιακῶν) in north-central Asia Minor. He recognises that this localisation was an important aspect of their service, and he makes, in passing, some pertinent remarks on the subject of their association with the province[40]. However, he does not systematically enquire why they were settled in that particular area and what form of support they derived from it. Neither question can be answered with any certainty, but in seeking the answers we can at least more clearly define the parameters of our ignorance.

The narrative sources describe the Norman presence in terms of «wintering» or «winter quarters» (παραχειμασία), exactly the same expression which is used of

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39. J. Shepard, «The Uses of the Franks in Eleventh-Century Byzantium», *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1993), pp. 275-305; cf. n. 3 above.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288.

the Rus and the Varangians in other parts of Asia Minor earlier in the eleventh century[41]. It is logical to assume that the arrangement was exactly the same in all cases, and to equate this arrangement with the billeting (*mitaton*) mentioned in the exemption clauses of imperial privileges issued to monasteries in the mid to late eleventh centuries. As Professor Oikonomides has shown, these clauses are very helpful in documenting the chronology of the recruitment of ethnic *tagmata*[42]. But it is not clear that *mitaton* refers to the regular settlement of such *tagmata*, as opposed to the temporary lodging of troops in transit, or between campaigns away from the area where they were normally stationed. None of the surviving documents apply to eastern and central Asia Minor. In any case, it cannot be assumed that the administrative arrangements remained unchanged during the course of this period of constant evolution in the imperial administration. Nor can it be assumed that all ethnic *tagmata* were treated in the same way: the Normans, being heavily armed knights, would have required much more substantial facilities and resources than the Varangians, who were footsoldiers. What little we know of the stationing of the Normans in the Armeniakon suggests that this went beyond mere billeting. Their presence in the area is mentioned in connection with the rebellions of the three most eminent Norman leaders: Hervé Frangopoulos against Michael VI in 1057[43], Robert Crispin against Romanos IV in 1070[44], and Roussel of Bailleul against Michael VII in 1073-1076[45]. From these mentions three things are clear.

Firstly, the Normans were established in the area for at least twenty years and probably more than thirty years, given that Hervé is said to have passed into imperial service from that of the rebellious general George Maniakes. If Hervé and his followers were part of the army that Maniakes led against Constantinople in 1043, it is highly likely that they enrolled in the imperial forces immediately after Maniakes' death at the battle of Ostrovo[46]. In any case, it is reasonable to suppose that they settled in the Armeniakon under Constantine IX.

Secondly, the three leaders were in effect local magnates; they were «powerful» (*dynatoi*) in both the economic and the political sense. Hervé had a house in the region called Dagabare; since he had the title of *vestes* and aspired to

41. Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 394.

42. Oikonomides, «L'évolution», p. 144; Idem, «Ρώσοι ἔμποροι καὶ στρατιῶτες στην Κωνσταντινούπολη», *Χίλια χρόνια Ελληνισμού-Ρωσίας*, Athens 1994, pp. 41-51, esp. p. 46ff.

43. Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, pp. 484-485.

44. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1853, pp. 122-125.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 198-199; Nikephoros Bryennios, ed. P. Gautier, Brussels 1975, pp. 182-187.

46. Attaleiates, ed. Bekker, p. 19; Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 428.

the title of *magistros*, it must have been a sizeable estate. Crispin and Roussel were able to defy the imperial forces from fortresses which they seem to have held before they began their respective rebellions; in other words, the fortresses were held by imperial grant.

Thirdly, there is no evidence that the Normans were deeply unpopular with the locals; on the contrary, when Alexios Komnenos was sent in 1075-1076 to bring Roussel of Bailleul to justice, he encountered a degree of non-cooperation from the people of Amaseia which suggests that although Roussel and his Normans were helping themselves to local resources, they did so no more oppressively than the imperial authorities, and provided better value for money in terms of an effective defence against the Turks[47].

The Normans were therefore stationed in the Armeniakon long enough to put down strong economic and social roots. From the outset their leaders had «powerful» status in the area, which from 1070, if not earlier, involved the tenure of fortified strongholds, the key assets of public authority[48]. From this it seems to me that they should be viewed in the same context as two other ethnic groups which were settled on imperial territory in the course of the eleventh century. One consisted of the Armenian princes and their followings who gave up their hereditary lordships in Armenia and were compensated by Basil II and Constantine IX with large estates in Cappadocia and other parts of eastern Anatolia[49]. The other group was comprised of the Uz and the Pechenegs who came over to the emperor Constantine X in 1065, receiving land in Thrace and senatorial titles in return for military service as *symmachoi*[50].

Again, we cannot assume that the same arrangements applied in both cases, or that the case of the Normans was identical with either. However, one basic point of similarity can be inferred: both the Armenians and the Uz were settled on fiscal land. The estates granted to the Armenians were extensive and valuable. They were

47. Bryennios, *loc. cit.*

48. By the reign of Michael VII, grants of *kastra* had become sufficiently numerous to require legislation limiting their validity «to one person» that is to the lifetime of the recipient: *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, p. 282. Cf. N. Oikonomides, «The Donations of Castles in the Last Quarter of the 11th Century (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 1012)», *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Wirth, Heidelberg 1966, pp. 413-417, and the interesting discussion of this phenomenon in a wider, comparative context, by M. Whittow, «Rural Fortifications in Western Europe and Byzantium, Tenth to Twelfth Century», *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995), pp. 57-74, esp. p. 68ff.

49. G. Dédéyan, «L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XIe siècle», *Byzantion* 45 (1975), pp. 41-117.

50. Attaleiates, ed. Bekker, p. 87: χώραν λαβόντες δημοσίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονικῆς. Here as elsewhere Attaleiates is referring to the Byzantine theme of Macedonia, with its capital at Adrianople.

largely on territory which had been reconquered from the Arabs in the tenth century and organised into *episkepseis* and *kouratoreiai*, that is fiscal domains[51]. Some estates may also have been derived from the domains which Basil II had confiscated from the magnate families of Phokas and Maleinos[52]. In the case of the Uz, we are told explicitly that the land they were given in Thrace was δημοσία; Thrace was an area of extensive fiscal domains. What is interesting is that the emperor provided land rather than money. Presumably, since the beneficiaries were warriors of nomadic origin, they did not farm the land themselves, but received the surplus production of the peasants who did. The land grant therefore seems to have been at the very least a supplement to, and in all probability a substitute for, the cash payments that went with senatorial titles and military service. In this connection, it is worth observing that according to a twelfth-century source, the yearly distribution of senatorial *rogai* at court ended with this same emperor Constantine X[53]. At the same time, Constantine X was notorious for his devotion to the interests of the fisc[54]. One may therefore reasonably conclude that his grant of land to the Uz and the Pechenegs was not unconditional. It is also reasonable to conclude that if such a fiscally minded emperor was prepared to grant out prime agricultural land in the hinterland of Constantinople, he and other rulers of the time would not have been averse to making similar grants in the more distant, landlocked area of the Armeniakon which was not vital for the food supply of the capital.

The point cannot be pressed any further, but it can perhaps be substantiated by considering the reasons why Constantine Monomachos chose to station Hervé and his followers in the Armeniakon. One reason was undoubtedly strategic. After the suppression of the Tornikios revolt in 1047, the Normans were mainly employed in combating the new threat from the Seljuk Turks. The Armeniakon lay close to the main road from Constantinople to the northern sector of the eastern front, where the pressure was initially most acute; other Norman units were stationed further east along this road, in the theme of Koloneia[55]. It is also conceivable that the Normans were initially recruited to augment the thematic *tagma* of the Armeniakoi, which saw distinguished service in Sicily in 1037, when it seems to have been undermanned compared with the field armies supplied by other

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51. Howard-Johnston, «Crown Lands», pp. 95-98.

52. *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, pp. 264-265 (ed. Svoronos-Gounaridis, p. 203); Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 340. Cf. J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*, Paris 1990, pp. 213-215.

53. Theodore Balsamon, in G. A. Rallis and A. Potlis, Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων, Athens 1852-1859, IV, p. 523.

54. Attaleiates, ed. Bekker, p. 76; Magdalino, «Justice and Finance», p. 94.

55. Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 490.

major themes[56]. Either way, however, the choice of the Armeniakon must have had something to do with the availability of resources, and with the fact that Cappadocia, which would have been equally advantageous from a strategic point of view, had already been used to accommodate the Armenian nobility, on lands of which some, I have suggested, had been confiscated from Byzantine magnate families. We should therefore look at the pattern of magnate landownership in the Armeniakon before the mid eleventh century.

In the tenth century, the Armeniakon had been the landed base of two great families, those of Lekapenos and Kourkouas, which ascended the throne in the persons of Romanos I and John I Tzimiskes[57]. Tzimiskes, who probably inherited the local landed interests of both families, demonstrated his attachment to the province by founding at least one monastery near Neokaisareia[58], by upgrading the church of St Theodore Stratelates at Euchaneia[59], and by remitting all the taxes of the theme[60]. However, he did not pass on his very considerable fortune to his relatives; in penance, no doubt, for his murder of Nikephoros II, he used the wealth which he had received by imperial gift to endow a new extension to the leper hospital in Constantinople, and he gave away his family estates to the neighbouring peasants[61]. This action, combined with his tax remittance, would have had the effect of greatly strengthening the small landowning element in the Armeniakon. We can be sure that the next emperor, Basil II, encouraged the trend. Possibly, therefore, the Norman mercenaries were concentrated in the Armeniakon because this was predominantly an area of humble taxpayers who could be imposed upon without political repercussions for the government. However, the reign of Basil II did bring to the fore one magnate family, that of Dalassenos, which was based in the Armeniakon in the first half of the eleventh century[62]. The foremost representative of this family, Constantine Dalassenos, was regarded as a potential successor to the

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 406; Cheynet, «Les effectifs», p. 324, and Idem, «La politique militaire», p. 67.

57. Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, p. 419, 426; Leo the Deacon, ed. Hase, pp. 99-100; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 216, 270-271.

58. Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 285; Michael the Syrian, ed. and tr. F. Chabot, *Chronique*, Paris 1905, III, p. 129.

59. Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 309; cf. N. Oikonomides, «Le dédoublement de S. Théodore et les villes d'Euchaïta et d'Euchaneia», *Analecta Bollandiana* 104 (1986), pp. 327-335, esp. p. 330ff.

60. Leo the Deacon, ed. Hase, p. 100.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

62. On the family in general, see J.-C. Cheynet and J.-F. Vannier, *Études prosopographiques*, Paris 1986, pp. 75-115. The family's provincial base in the Armeniakon is mentioned by Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, p. 373.

throne from 1028 to 1042[63]. When the empress Zoe eventually decided to take a
third husband, Dalassenos was at the top of her short-list. He must have felt very
angry and humiliated when Zoe passed him over for Constantine Monomachos, and
Monomachos, as emperor, must have feared the consequences of his resentment[64].
The fact that we hear no more of him or of the Dalassenos connection with the
Armeniakon may indicate that his estates were confiscated at the time of Maniakes'
rebellion –the event which brought Hervé and his Normans into imperial service.

### Some thoughts on the origins of the pronoia

One thing, at least, is not a matter of speculation. The remuneration and
maintenance of foreign mercenaries in eleventh-century Byzantium was not limited
to cash-payments disbursed by government paymasters and billeting on the civilian
population. Their relationship with their sources of support was not uniform or
static, and it involved a degree of economic dominion over the land and its
cultivators that was sanctioned and mediated by the fisc[65]. In other words, the
relationship was evolving in the direction of the conditional tenure of land and
usufruct of its revenues that came to be known as the *pronoia*. I shall not attempt
to trace the history of this institution –that would take us way beyond the eleventh
century, and duplicate work being done by Dr Maniati-Kokkini[66], or to review the
state of scholarship on the issue –that has been done by Professor Kazhdan[67]. But
the origins of the *pronoia* are of interest to this forum on Byzantium at war, because
they remain in need of clarification, despite all that has been written on the subject.
Above all, it remains uncertain whether, or to what extent, the *pronoia* existed in
the eleventh century. The datable references to that period are all literary and non-
technical, whereas no firm date attaches to what has been presumed to be the

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63. Cheynet-Vannier, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

64. Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. and tr. E. Renauld, I, Paris 1926, p. 123.

65. For another, slightly later example of foreign mercenaries who collected their income at
source, see the account of the Anglo-Saxon exiles who took service with Alexios I in 1085: ed. K.
Ciggaar, «L'émigration anglaise à Byzance après 1066. Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à
Constantinople», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 32 (1974), pp. 301-342, at 322: «Imperator... insuper
municiones eorum primoribus largitus est agros et vineas. Redditus quarum plurimos universis
contradidit».

66. Cf. Triantafyllitsa Maniati-Kokkini, «Μία πρώτη προσέγγιση στη μελέτη του βυζαντινού
θεσμού της πρόνοιας: οι προνοιάριοι», *Ελληνική Ιστορική Εταιρεία. Θ´ Πανελλήνιο Ιστορικό Συνέ-
δριο (Μάιος 1988). Πρακτικά*, Thessaloniki 1988, pp. 49-60.

67. A. P. Kazhdan, «*Pronoia*: The History of a Scholarly Discussion», *Mediterranean Historical
Review* 10 (1995), pp. 133-163.

earliest technical reference, the mention of *pronoiatika* in the fragment of a fiscal treatise published by Karayannopoulos[68].

It needs to be stressed that, barring a miracle, we cannot hope for more and better evidence; we have to make the best of what we have, and cannot afford to eliminate sources on the grounds that they are problematic and fail the test of our own untested preconceptions. Thus it is unhelpful, on the one hand, to dismiss the evidence of texts which do not use the word *pronoia*, Niketas Choniates being the obvious example. Equally, on the other hand, we cannot throw out occurrences of the word *pronoia* and its cognates, such as *pronoetes*, which predate the technical usage that we consider relevant. The technical history of the word must have had a non-technical prehistory. If we are going to get anywhere, it is by trying to determine the point at which the general meaning of the word becomes specific, technical and official. Until or unless we do this, we cannot exclude any part of the pre-existing semantic field from our consideration[69].

The existence of the *pronoia* in the twelfth century is proved beyond doubt by three documents in the Lavra archive, and by an entry in the property list of the foundation charter for the Pantokrator monastery. The Lavra documents are as follows:

1. An act of 1162, incorporating sections of a fiscal *praxis* of 1118, which both concern the boundaries of an estate (*proasteion*) held in *pronoia*, first by three soldiers, Romanos Rentinos and the brothers Theotimos and Leo Loukites, and then by a gentleman of some social standing but unspecified occupation, Kyr Pankratios Anemas[70].

2. A *praktikon* of 1181 and an imperial *prostaxis* of 1184 mentioning lands in the theme of Moglena held in *pronoia* by Cumans, who are not called soldiers, though it is hard to see what else they could be[71].

All documents refer to the land in question, together with the tenant farmers (*paroikoi*) who worked it, as being held εἰς πρόνοιαν, «in» «for» *pronoia*. The later documents also refer to the holdings themselves as *pronoia*. So too does the Pantokrator Typikon of 1136, where the founder, John II, lists among the

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68. J. Karayannopoulos, «Fragmente aus dem Vademecum eines byzantinischen Finanzbeamten», *Polychronion*, ed. P. Wirth (as in n. 48 above), p. 322: Τίνα εἰσι τὰ προνοιατικά; Τὰ ἐφ᾽ ὅρῳ τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζωῆς.

69. In this, the caution of A. Hohlweg («Zur Frage der Pronoia in Byzanz», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 60 [1967], pp. 288-308), cited with approval by Kazhdan, *op. cit.*, has perhaps proved over-scrupulous, although at the time it was a salutary reaction to the assumptions of G. Ostrogorsky, tr. H. Grégoire and P. Lemerle, *Pour l'histoire de la féodalité byzantine*, Brussels 1954.

70. *Actes de Lavra*, ed. P. Lemerle et al., I, Paris 1970, no. 64.

71. *Ibid.*, nos. 65-66.

properties with which he endowed the monastery «the *pronoia* of the late departed Synadenos at Hexamilion in the *emporion* of Brachionios»[72].

Meagre as it is, the documentation is suggestive of a certain evolution. The institution of the *pronoia* as a fiscal resource granted to soldiers and others on the government's payroll certainly existed in 1118. The word *pronoia* was already being applied to this institution in 1136, as shorthand for the more formal adverbial phrase εἰς πρόνοιαν which preserved the original non-technical meaning of the term. Both facts suggest that the specific, technical meaning was well established by the end of Alexios I's reign, and that its non-technical origins must be sought no later than 1100.

*Pronoia*, as we all know, means «care», or «provision» or «solicitude». But «care» or «provision» or «solicitude» for whom or for what in the specific context? Care for the property or provision for the property holder? The question, it seems, is never posed because the answer is taken for granted: it is assumed that *pronoia*, like *beneficium*, means provision for the landholder. But the technical uses of the term give no grounds for such an assumption: εἰς πρόνοιαν can equally be understood as referring to care for the property. If we now look at the three literary references to *pronoia* in the eleventh century, we find that at least one and possibly two of the sources use the word in this sense. According to Skylitzes Continuatus, Constantine IX Monomachos gave Constantine Leichoudes the *pronoia* of the Mangana: obviously care of the institution, though no doubt highly profitable for the caretaker[73]. According to Michael Attaleiates, the eunuch Nikephoritzes distributed honours and *pronoiai* to people in return for not inconsiderable douceurs: *pronoiai* here may be provisions or benefices, but again the reference may be to the profitable care of some church or state asset[74]. That leaves Anna Comnena's *pronoiai* on land and sea, which she says Alexios I gave to the Orphanotropheion, as the only apparently unambiguous reference to «provision» for the grantee; but the passage deserves a closer look, and Anna Comnena is, in any case, a twelfth-century author[75].

Moreover, and most crucially, the cognate of *pronoia*, *pronoetes*, which occurs in official usage of the late eleventh and early twelfth century, clearly refers to a person with the «care» of someone else's property. The word is used both of

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72. P. Gautier, «Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 32 (1974), p. 117.

73. Ed. E. Tsolakis, Ἡ συνέχεια τῆς Χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτση (*Ioannes Skylitzes Continuatus*), Thessaloniki 1968, p. 106.

74. Attaleiates, ed. Bekker, p. 200.

75. Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, XV.7, 7: ed. B. Leib, Paris 1937-1945, III, pp. 216-217.

the agents who administered the domains of members of the Komnenian family[76], and, on a higher level, of the administrators of regions like Samos and Bulgaria which can be presumed to have counted as fiscal territory[77]. Indeed, the functions of a *pronoetes* in the late eleventh century seem barely distinguishable from those which were traditionally performed by a *kourator* (Latin *curator*)[78], and it can be postulated that the Greek word was displacing the Latin loan-word as the preferred designation of a domain administrator[79]. That the notion of *pronoia* inherent in both the Latin and the Greek titles was perfectly understood by contemporaries is neatly illustrated by a late tenth-century text, the *Life of St Paul of Latros*, where an imperial domain administrator in the Miletos area is described as «the *proto-spatharios* Michael ... to whom the *pronoia* of imperial properties was entrusted»[80].

So, far from being an irrelevance, the eleventh-century references to *pronoia* provide the key to the origins and significance of the late Byzantine institution. The key lies in the concept of conditional and limited tenure common to all grants of public property, whether fortresses, monasteries, or land and labour[81]. The *pronoia*

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76. *Actes de Lavra*, I, no. 51; *Actes de Xéropotamou*, ed. J. Bompaire, Paris 1964, no. 7; *Actes d'Iviron*, ed. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomides, D. Papachryssanthou, II, Paris 1990, nos. 45, 50, 51.

77. Samos: Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου, II, Δημοσίων λειτουργῶν, ed. Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Athens 1980, nos. 52-53; Bulgaria: Kekaumenos, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and B. Jernstedt, St Petersburg 1896, p. 24 (ed. G. Litavrin [Moscow 1972], p. 164); G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, II, Berne 1984, no. 988. Cf. Ahrweiler, *Recherches*, p. 50, 85. The fiscal status of Samos is suggested by the analogy of the neighbouring islands of Chios, which was a crown «appanage» in the twelfth century (P. Magdalino, *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, [Cambridge 1993], p. 165), and Lesbos, which was administered by a *kourator* : Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, VII.8, 1, ed. Leib, II, p. 110 (on the title of *kourator*, see the following note). Note that the Armenian chronicler Aristakes of Lastivert uses the term *Hog*, the equivalent of *pronoia*, to describe the provincial governorships bestowed by Michael IV on his brothers: tr. H. Berberian, *Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne*, Brussels 1973, pp. 33-34.

78. On *kouratores*, see N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972, p. 318. The two terms are used interchangeably of the same person in one eleventh-century *praktikon*: ed. N. Wilson and J. Darrouzès, «Restes du cartulaire de Hiéra-Xérochoraphion», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 26 (1968), pp. 17-19.

79. The term *kourator* did, however, remain in use: Nicholas Kataskepenos, *La Vie de Saint Cyrille le Philéote, moine byzantin*, ed. E. Sargologos, Brussels 1964, pp. 86-87.

80. Ed. H. Delehaye, *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892), p. 138: ὁ πρωτοσπαθάριος Μιχαὴλ ἐκεῖνος ᾧ ἡ τῶν βασιλικῶν κτημάτων ἐγκεχείριστο πρόνοια.

81. As formulated most clearly by Hélène Ahrweiler, «La concession des droits incorporels. Donations conditionnelles», *Actes du XIIe Congrès International des études byzantines*, II, Belgrade 1964, pp. 103-114.

was technically a fiscal resource entrusted to the nominal administration of any person, either a soldier or some dignitary or functionary, whom the emperor needed to remunerate for services of any kind. The recipient was not called *pronoetes*, because he did not serve the emperor as a domain administrator, and exercised his tenure for his own profit. However, the notion that he received the resource «in *pronoia*» legally denied him ownership and made him legally accountable for the condition in which he left it. The *pronoia* was thus not a legal innovation, but the logical outcome of the land legislation of the tenth century, as applied by imperial judges throughout the eleventh century[82]. This legislation was ultimately the instrument for an imperial policy of bringing land under state ownership. The *pronoia* was a simple but effective formula for preserving state ownership of resources which the government found itself compelled to grant to the very class of people whose appropriation of land the tenth-century legislation had sought to deny. The formula was probably developed between the 1050s and the 1070s, when the government was recruiting more and more foreign soldiers, and distributing more and more pensioned titles, against a background of territorial loss, monetary shortage, and a mounting refugee problem. But though conceived in a crisis, the *pronoia* remained in use after the crisis was over, and really took off at the height of the empire's revival under the Komnenoi.

Whether the *pronoia* marked an increasing feudalisation of Byzantine society is another question; a question that is becoming increasingly redundant now that western medievalists, the historians of the feudal society par excellence, are having serious doubts about the very concept of feudalism[83]. I see no harm in retaining the concept as a rhetorical construct, for purposes of evocation, with no claim to scientific precision. But I think it is unhelpful to see Byzantine feudalism as the antithesis of Byzantine fiscalism, and the transition from *stratiotikon ktema* to military *pronoia* as a passage from fiscal control to feudal devolution of state resources. Both were products of a consistently fiscal approach to the problem of military logistics. «À cet égard, on peut affirmer que l'empire byzantin est dans une large mesure victime de ses trop grandes qualités administratives... »[84].

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82. Magdalino, «Justice and Finance», p. 105 and passim.

83. S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, Oxford 1994.

84. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, p. 237.

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## THE USES OF THE FRANKS IN ELEVENTH-CENTURY BYZANTIUM

Jonathan Shepard

'Mercenaries' have often been associated by historians with the decline which they discern in eleventh-century Byzantium. The hirelings have been viewed as the opposite of the 'soldier peasants' who were supposedly one of the empire's pillars in its heyday. For example, P. Charanis wrote: 'The enrolled soldiers [from among the "free peasantry"], neglected and reduced to poverty, had neither the will nor the equipment to fight. The mercenaries who replaced them helped to complete the disintegration of the state'.[1] A similarly negative view was taken by R. Jenkins: to replace the 'peasant-soldiers', 'the expensive and otherwise unsatisfactory system of importing foreign mercenaries was widely resorted to'.[2] Such blanket condemnations are rarer in recent historical writing, but we may note, without prejudice, J.J. Norwich's verdict that 'mercenaries were by their very nature unreliable, being loyal to their paymasters only for as long as they received their pay, or until someone else offered them more'.[3] Among these mercenaries, according to Charanis, 'the most turbulent and intractable were the Normans'.[4] He cites Hervé, Robert Crispin and Roussel of Bailleul, all three of whom did indeed desert from or rebel against the emperor. Roussel's treachery in the early to mid-1070s has often been narrated or summarised: he tried to create lordships for himself in Asia minor and his adventures only came to an end when he was brought into custody by a young Byzantine commander.[5] We hear rather less about Roussel's subsequent career – how, after a spell in prison, he was released and sent to fight under the orders of that same young commander against other rebels or how subsequently he himself led another operation on behalf of his

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1  P. Charanis, 'The Byzantine Empire in the Eleventh Century', *A History of the Crusades*, i, ed. K.M. Setton and M.W. Baldwin, Madison, Milwaukee, 1969, 204.
2  R. Jenkins, *Byzantium: the Imperial Centuries* A.D. 610–1071, London 1966, 365; cf. S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley 1971, 4,76.
3  J.J. Norwich, *Byzantium*, ii, *The Apogee*, London 1991, 339.
4  Charanis, 200.
5  e.g. L. Bréhier, 'Les aventures d'un chef normand en Orient', *Revue des cours et conférences de la Faculté des Lettres de Paris* xx, 1911, 172–88; K.M. Mekios, *Der Fränkische Krieger Ursel de Bailleul*, Athens 1939, 14–32; D.I. Polemis, 'Notes on Eleventh-Century Chronology: 6, the Revolt of Roussel', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* lviii, 1965, 66–8; J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im byzantinischen Reich (1071–1204)*, Munich 1974, 13–20; Vryonis, 106–08; M.J. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204. A Political History*, London 1984, 93–4; J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)*, Paris 1990, 78; *Oxford History of Byzantium*, iii, ed. A.P. Kazhdan *et al.*, New York/Oxford 1991, 1814–15.

imperial employer, carrying it out effectively.[6] We also hear less of the simple fact that foreign mercenaries continued to be employed by the emperor in the closing decades of the eleventh century and during the twelfth, a period of political stability in comparison with the middle years of the eleventh century and, even, of imperial revival.

The employment of mercenaries was not, then, necessarily disastrous in itself and the presence in the army of mercenaries from the Latin west was not utterly incompatible with strong and enduring emperors. In fact, Alexius Comnenus, the emperor generally credited with the Byzantine recovery and a noted employer of western mercenaries, had been the young commander who had brought Roussel back to Constantinople in chains in the mid-1070s. Alexius, of all people, might have been expected to know better than to recruit such men, if western mercenaries were so inherently unreliable.

It would be facile to try and turn the argument inside out, claiming that 'Frankish' mercenaries were invariably loyal or an unqualified benefit to the Byzantine state. For patently they did sometimes rebel, and there were doubts about their employment on the part of some Byzantines. It seems preferable to start from what is reasonably certain: that there is no evidence of the employment of 'Franks' in significant or substantial numbers by Byzantine provincial or expeditionary force commanders before c.1038 or by the central government before c.1047. We shall ask why they began to be employed more extensively then, but not earlier, and note the impact which they seem swiftly to have made on Byzantine observers. And it is worth glancing at such evidence as exists about the nature and conditions of their service and the careers of individual commanders. Those careers about which we know something mostly involve revolts and at first sight confirm the darkest prognostications about western mercenaries. It must, however, be remembered that it was the colourful risings of rebels that excited the curiosity or moralising tendencies of the chroniclers, and there may well have been many 'Frankish' commanders whose service in Byzantium was almost as illustrious as Crispin's or Roussel's, but who never behaved in such a way as to attract attention in the chronicles; that is, they never revolted. And underlying our enquiry will be the question of whether the 'Franks' were of positive military value, and if so, in what way – did they possess some martial skill or equipment which other peoples lacked? Perhaps we shall find that the 'Franks' were, on the whole, as neutral as their weapons and their mounts, being amenable enough, if attentively handled by an employer acquainted with their customs, foibles and needs.

First, though, two more basic questions must be raised: what did the Byzantines mean by the name 'Frank' and did they utilise any term precisely corresponding to the English word 'mercenary'; and, as a rider to the second question, does a term specifically meaning 'mercenary' appear in Byzantine sources in the eleventh century, or earlier? The first question brings us to the

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[6]   Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1853, 252–4, 257; Scylitzes Continuatus, *E synecheia tēs chronographias tou Ioannou Skylitzē*, ed. E.T. Tsolakes, Thessalonica 1968, 175–6; John Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, iii, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst, Bonn 1897, 717; Nicephorus Bryennius, whose lengthy account of Roussel's insurrection in the mid–1070s forms the basis of most secondary works' accounts, is laconic about the final episodes in his career before his sudden death: *Histoire*, ed. and French tr. P. Gautier, Brussels 1975, 148–9, 166–95, 254–5.

problem of whether the persons under discussion can be described as 'Normans' at all, and raises the issue of what constituted a 'Norman' identity, or warranted appellation as 'Norman'. Suffice it to say here that the name 'Frank' had been in Byzantine use since Late Antiquity and could denote western Christian peoples in general, inhabitants of the *regnum Teutonicum* as well as of Gaul. It commonly denoted those living in, or hailing from, north of the Alps, but of course any Norman in the south could still fit that description reasonably comfortably in the eleventh century. No term specific to the Normans (whether of the north or the south) became current in Byzantine high-style literary works. There, they could be termed 'Frank', 'Italian', 'Celt' or 'Latin'. The lack of precision is not entirely the fault of Byzantine writers' archaising tendencies or ignorance. The origins and allegiances of those Romance-speakers arriving in Byzantium by way of southern Italy from further afield were not homogeneous and the labels which these newcomers applied to themselves – or had applied to them by local record-keepers – were variegated.[7] At any rate, 'Franks' could designate persons owing some form of allegiance, direct, indirect or ancestral, to the duke of Normandy. Robert Guiscard is called Robert 'the Frank' in a work of the 1070s and I believe that most of those 'Franks' first mentioned *en masse* in Byzantine sources for the mid-eleventh century would have answered that description;[8] so would many of their successors in the later eleventh century, although men from other parts of the west, such as Flanders and Germany were now in the imperial service, too. It is impossible to substantiate this belief with a full body of evidence, but it is significant that on two of those rare occasions when we have scraps of prosopographical evidence on 'Frankish' commanders, they have Norman connections: a twelfth-century family history of the Crispins lays claim to Robert Crispin; and the valour and zest for battle of Roussel de Bailleul is recorded by Geoffrey Malaterra in his account of Count Roger's victory on the river Cerami, in Sicily in 1063.[9] And when Anna Comnena wishes to bestow unambiguous – and high –

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[7] William of Apulia writes of *Franci* and *Francigenae* in relating the newcomers' exploits in southern Italy: *La geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. M. Mathieu, Palermo 1961, 118, 120, 122, 138. His protagonists feature as *Normanni* and *Galli* throughout the work. See also Geoffrey Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis, RIS²*, v.1, ed. E. Pontieri, *praefazione*, xxxiii; Orderic, iv, 34, n. 5.

[8] Cecaumenus, *Strategikon*, ed. and Russian tr. G.G. Litavrin, Moscow 1972, 186, 254. A Greek charter issued by the *katepano* Eustathius in 1045 mentions the disturbances caused by *tōn Frankōn*, i.e. the Normans under William Iron-Arm: *Codice diplomatico barese*, iv, *Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari*, ed. F.N. di Vito, Bari 1900, 67. For discussion of the usage of *Frangos* ('Frank') in Byzantine sources, see Litavrin, n. 460 on p. 441; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, i, 803.

[9] Robert Crispin is described as *Northmannia egressus* in *De nobili genere Crispinorum*, Migne, *Patrologia latina*, cl, col. 737; J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, Cambridge 1911, 14. Roussel is designated by Malaterra (ed. Pontieri, 43) as *de Ballione*, a toponym which is not peculiar to Normandy: see Du Cange's disquisition on Norman families which are possible candidates for kinship with Roussel, reprinted in Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, ed. A. Meineke, Bonn 1836, 221–6. Roussel's origins remain undetermined, but his movements are not dissimilar in pattern to Crispin's or, most probably, those of other Norman fortune-seekers – from the Normanno-Italian south to Byzantium. Crispin, after seeing action against the Moslems in Spain, was in southern Italy in June 1066 and within a couple of years he had crossed to Byzantium: G.A. Loud, 'A Calendar of the Diplomas of the Norman Princes of Capua', *Papers of the British School at Rome* xlix, 1981, 121–2; cf. E.M.C. van Houts, 'Normandy and Byzantium in the eleventh Century', *Byzantion* lv, 1985, 555–6. The dates of Roussel's

praise on her brother-in-law, Nicephorus Euphorbenus, for his equestrian skills, she says that 'if one were to see him on horseback, one would not have supposed that he was a Roman, but that he had come from Normandy *(Normanōthen)*'. She singles out his skill in wielding his long lance and protecting himself with his shield.[10] Anna was, of course, writing in the 1130s and 1140s, but in a way this makes her usage the more remarkable; for by that time many *non*-Norman knights and grandees from the west were serving with the imperial forces, and it may be that Anna was using a kind of figure of speech which had been coined at a time when Normans were, to Byzantine eyes, *the* model of superb military horsemanship. But perhaps the strongest reason for supposing that many of the mercenaries described as 'Franks' in Byzantine sources had some sort of Norman associations is what is at least a coincidence: mention of 'Frankish' mercenaries begins for about the same period that we first hear in western sources of Normans and their associates in southern Italy serving the *basileus*.

The other question, of what was the Byzantine term for 'mercenary' and whether it was a novelty in eleventh-century Byzantine sources, opens up a huge and oddly uncharted subject. Only a few preliminary observations can be offered here. Foreigners – non-Greek-speaking outsiders – had been in the armed service of the empire from the fourth century A.D., but not all of them were full-time, professional warriors, arriving as armed individuals and serving, or intending to serve, only for a limited period. Many arrived in groups, or as the arms-bearing members of entire peoples, and not always by invitation of the government.[11] These were not so much soldiers of fortune as invaders or immigrants in quest of lands, but constituting a pool of military manpower. It was always possible for individuals to join the ruling élite of Byzantium, earning through martial prowess senior military commands and court titles. These entailed annual payments to them in gold by the emperor personally, access to the Great Palace's banquets and other ceremonies, and entry into the Byzantine 'establishment'.[12]

It must, however, be emphasised that the precise role and the numbers of 'aliens' in imperial service varied greatly over the centuries, according to the types of warfare which the armed forces were undertaking. So long as their stance

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departure from Count Roger's service and arrival at Byzantium are not known; but seeing that he was a member of Crispin's 'company' *(hetaireia)*, he could well have arrived as such: Bryennius, 146–7.

[10] Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, ii, ed. B. Leib, Paris 1943, 197. The context of the remark is a campaign of the mid-1090s.

[11] On the recruitment of non-'Romans' in the fourth century, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, Oxford 1990, 11–25, 40–7. The imperial authorities sometimes retained and equipped groups of professional warriors even beyond the frontier: M. Kazanski, 'Contribution à l'histoire de la défense de la frontière pontique au Bas-Empire', *Travaux et Mémoires* xi, 1991, 506–08. It should be noted that the degree of the government's reliance on foreign-born troops varied markedly during the first half of the sixth century: J.L. Teall, 'The Barbarians in Justinian's Armies', *Speculum* xl, 1965, 299–300, 309–12, 321–2. I owe the latter reference to Douglas Lee, Trinity College, Cambridge.

[12] See, for example, P. Charanis, *Armenians in the Byzantine Empire*, Lisbon 1963, 29–30, 33–4; H. Ditten, 'Prominente Slawen und Bulgaren in Byzantinischen Diensten (Ende des 7. bis Anfang des 10. Jahrhunderts)', *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in Byzanz*, ed. H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann, Berlin 1983, 115, 117; G. Dédéyan, 'La contribution des arméniens à l'effort de guerre de Byzance (IV–XI siècles)', *Colloque international d'histoire militaire (Histoire militaire comparée* I), Montpellier 1981, 37–9.

was essentially defensive, there was only an occasional need for large quantities of extra military manpower. The one prominent role for non-Greek warriors was that of guarding the Great Palace and the emperor's person. The imperial *hetaireia* ('bodyguard') was made up mainly of foreigners (probably of noble stock): c.900 it contained enough western Europeans – 'Franks' – for them to be mentioned by name alongside Saracens and Khazars.[13] But their numbers were modest, and they probably served essentially as exotica, adding mystique to the court ceremonial. A change came when Byzantine strategy shifted to one of large-scale offensives in the mid-tenth century; substantial tracts of land were annexed, and these needed to be garrisoned and defended. This expansionism became a declared policy of Basil II (976–1018), and what could be called a 'habit of expansionism' continued to prevail up to the mid-eleventh century.[14] Byzantium's armed forces had previously consisted to a large extent of part-time soldiers, trained for guerilla warfare and the defence of their localities.[15] So it is not surprising that we find the government trying to introduce new tactics for sustained offensives, or that one of the sources of soldiers trained or seasoned in the attack lay abroad – among the Armenians, above all, but also the Hungarians, the Rus, the Khazars and the Bulgarians. Already in the 950s, the Byzantine expeditionary force to Syria consisted of several different peoples, inspiring an Arabic poet to write that 'people of all languages and all nations were assembled there, and only their interpreters could understand what they were saying'; the poet claimed that their successive ranks 'covered the east and the west'.[16]

In order to raise sizable enough units of foreign warriors of quality, Byzantium needed not only the permission but also the active cooperation of their respective lords or overlords; for a ruler or ruling élite could not be indifferent to the exodus of a significant proportion of his (or its) military manpower. Thus the invasion force of 958 seems to have been raised to a considerable extent through agreements with the rulers of such peoples as the Bulgarians and the Rus.[17] In 974, a force was sent by Ashot III, 'king of kings' of Armenia, to assist Emperor John Tzimisces in campaigning against the Arabs. Tzimisces had apparently requested that Ashot should also send 'food and provisions' for them. The figure given by Matthew of Edessa for this contingent – 10,000 men – may not be unduly inflated.[18] It is comparable with the figures we have for other foreign armies sent by established rulers to aid Basil II in the later tenth century: 12,000 cavalrymen are said to have been sent in 979 by the ruler of Tao (Tayk), a principality in the western borderlands of Georgia and Armenia;[19] and a decade or so later 6,000 Rus warriors were sent by Prince Vladimir of Kiev to rescue Basil, who was

[13] N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX et X siècles*, Paris 1972, 176–7.

[14] J. Shepard, 'Byzantium Expanding', *New Cambridge Medieval History*, iii, ed. T. Reuter (forthcoming).

[15] G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris 1986, 184–6, 190–3, 276.

[16] A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 2.ii, Brussels 1950, 333 (Mutanabbi).

[17] Vasiliev, 2.ii, p.368 (Abu Firas).

[18] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, tr. A.E. Dostourian (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1972), 20; P.E. Walker, 'The "Crusade" of John Tzimisces in the Light of New Arabic Evidence', *Byzantion* xlvii, 1977, 313; Dédéyan, 43.

[19] P. Peeters, *Histoires monastiques géorgiennes*, *Analecta Bollandiana* xxxvi–xxxvii, 1917–19, 22.

facing a massive military revolt in which most of his eastern army had joined.[20] None of these figures is utterly certain, but it seems most likely that units number- ing several thousand apiece were in play; and the repeated mention of Armenian and Rus warriors in chronicles and military manuals for the period suggests that their numbers were kept up.[21] This was presumably achieved partly through the cooperation of the various princes of Armenia and of the ruler of the Rus. Almost certainly, the king of Hungary provided soldiers to liaise with Basil's army during the closing stages of his war against the Bulgarians.[22]

So while there was a substantial increase in the number of foreign-born war- riors in Byzantium from the later tenth century, this probably owed much to the intervention of their lords, ordering or urging them to serve with the Byzantines. Undoubtedly, some individuals or small groups did turn up, for example those who had long been manning the imperial bodyguard; and we occasionally hear of larger war-bands arriving in quest of employment: for example, a band of eight hundred Rus sailed down to Constantinople in the mid-1020s 'in the hope of becoming mercenaries'.[23] However, this episode was recorded because it was so singular, ending with the massacre of the war-band by the Byzantine authorities. And in any case, it seems to me probable that the Russo-Scandinavians, with the mobility which their boats gave them, and with their well-armed warrior élite, formed something of a special case.[24] Few other peoples possessed the means to travel to Byzantium reasonably rapidly and cheaply, bearing military skills and weaponry that were of keen interest to the empire. Even in the case of the Armeno-Georgians, neighbours of the empire, the cooperation of the princes or the 'king of kings' seems to have been needed to transfer really large units, thousands rather than hundreds to serve the emperor.

This, in turn, could help to explain why a term having the specific sense of 'mercenary' is slow to emerge in Byzantine sources covering the period. Foreign warriors or units are generally referred to as 'allies' or 'auxiliaries' (*symmachoi, symmachikon*), or simply as 'foreigners' (*ethnikoi*).[25] I suggest that the term 'allies' was not just a euphemism to obscure the extent to which the expanding

[20] Stephen of Taron (Asolik), *Histoire universelle*, tr. F. Macler, Paris 1917, 164.

[21] Armenians: Leo the Deacon, *Historia*, ed. C.B. Hase, Bonn 1828, 14, 28, 64–5; John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. H. Thurn, New York/Berlin 1973, 268, 275, 316, 321; *Praecepta militaria*, ed. J. Kulakovsky, *Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, Istoriko-Filologischeskoe Otdelenie*, viii, no. 9, St Petersburg 1908, p.1. Rus: *Praecepta*, ed. Kulakovsky, 2; *Campaign Organization* (*De re militari*) in G. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, Washington, D.C., 1985, 280–1, 294–5, 312–13.

[22] G. Györffy, 'Zur Geschichte der Eroberung Ochrids durch Basileios II.', *Actes du XII Congrès international des Etudes byzantines*, ii, Belgrade 1964, 149–52.

[23] Scylitzes, 367.

[24] S. Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, tr. and revised by B.S. Benedikz, Cambridge 1978, 49–50, 56–60; J. Shepard, 'Yngvarr's Expedition to the East and a Russian Inscribed Stone Cross', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* xxi, pts 3–4, 1984–85, 230, 275.

[25] *symmachoi/symmachikon*: e.g. Leo VI, *Tactica*, Migne *Patrologia graeca* cvii, cols 956, 1037; *Campaign Organization* ed. Dennis, 292–3; H. Ahrweiler, 'Un discours inédit de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète', *Travaux et Mémoires* ii, 1967, 399; J.-A. de Foucault, 'Douze chapitres inédits de la *Tactique* de Nicéphore Ouranos', *Travaux et Mémoires* v, 1973, 308–09. *ethnikoi*: Oikono- mides, 176–7, 208–09; *Praecepta*, ed. Kulakovsky, 2; R. Vári, 'Zum historischen Exzerptenwerke des Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* xvii, 1908, 82; Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. and tr. J.F. Haldon, Vienna 1990, 118–19. I am grateful to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (University of California, Irvine)

## The Uses of the Franks in Eleventh-Century Byzantium 281

empire relied on foreign soldiers: it was accurate, in that many of the Armenians and Russo-Scandinavians and others were serving as, in effect, allied forces, led or despatched by their overlords; they had not ventured to Byzantium on their own account, as soldiers of fortune. Thus it is not solely Byzantine literary conservatism that accounts for the lack of currency of a term having the specific sense of 'foreign warrior serving in return for pay'. Such a term does appear with reference to the later tenth century in the chronicle of John Scylitzes: *misthophoroi*, or *misthophorikon*, meaning, literally, 'wage-receivers, salary-earners' or a force composed of such persons. But Scylitzes was writing a century later;[26] by then, *misthophoroi/misthophorikon* was in vogue as a term, being treated as interchangeable with the older terms *symmachoi* and *ethnikoi*.[27] We cannot be sure which term was in the source upon which Scylitzes drew, and in any case the episodes to which he applies it are set in, or on the borderlands with, the Abbasid caliphate, and the term is not used of employees of the Byzantine state.[28]

If a term having the specific sense of 'mercenary, soldier for hire' (*misthophoros*) became common in Byzantine sources only from the eleventh century onwards, this could support the proposition that most of the foreign-born warriors at Byzantium before that time were serving essentially at the behest of their rulers. Of course, they must have been paid something, and if the pay or other rewards had seemed to them unsatisfactory, they would not have stayed long. But if the only people besides the Armenians providing substantial quantities of volunteers were the Russo-Scandinavians, it may be no coincidence that their homeland was not endowed by nature with precious metals or luxury goods other than amber, furs and walrus-ivory. In other words, they may have been relatively easily satisfied with their pay, whatever precise form it may have taken – perhaps a mixture of coins, gold and silver vessels, silks and precious cloth. Harald Hardraada is indeed said to have returned to the north with a mass of gold which 'twelve young men could scarcely lift'; but his was an extraordinary haul, exciting comment from both Adam of Bremen and Snorri Sturluson, and leaving an unparalleled mark on mid-eleventh-century Scandinavian coin designs.[29]

for conducting a word search for *symmachikon, ethnikoi, misthophoroi, misthophorikon* in the works of Procopius, Nicephorus, Theophanes Confessor, Theophanes Continuatus, George Monachus Continuatus, Constantine VII and John Scylitzes. The searches of some of these writers are not yet in final, 'corrected', form, but the general pattern of terms for denoting foreign warriors before the eleventh century is clear.

[26] W. Seibt, 'Ioannes Skylitzes. Zur Person des Chronisten', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* xxv, 1976, 83–5.

[27] *symmachoi* continued to be used in, e.g. Bryennius, ed. Gautier, 91, 259, 265, 271; likewise with *ethnikoi*, e.g. in late eleventh-century exemption charters: *Actes de Lavra* i, ed. P. Lemerle *et al.*, Paris 1970, 198, 243; cf. H. Ahrweiler, *Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX–XI siècles, Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique* lxxxiv, 1960, 34 and nn.8 and 9, repr. in Ahrweiler's *Etudes sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, London 1971, no.8.

[28] Scylitzes, 318, 319, 333. *misthophorikos* had been used by classical historians and is to be found in several of the works which were excerpted for the encyclopedic compilations of Constantine VII, e.g. *Excerpta de legationibus*, ed. C. de Boor, Berlin 1903, 10, 68, 70, 71, 159, 412, 548. Constantine did not, however, find use for the term in his own writings. Already in Late Antiquity the term seems to have been fairly rare, and to have been used primarily of compliant barbarian rulers or individuals retained by a fee, e.g. Agathias, *Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. R. Keydell, Berlin 1967, 195; Procopius, *Anecdota (Secret History)*, ed. and tr. H.B. Dewing, London 1935, 250, 292. For the former reference I am grateful to Douglas Lee.

[29] Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, ed. B. Schmeidler,

It is tempting to contrast diametrically these Russo-Scandinavians and the 'allies' drafted to Byzantium by their rulers with, on the other hand, the 'Franks' who appear quite abruptly in Greek and Latin sources on mid-eleventh-century Byzantium – self-serving, materialistic volunteers, to whom pay was of overriding concern, and who were swift to mutiny if left unsatisfied. Surviving literature of Norman inspiration about the Normans' early contacts with the 'Greeks' encourages this kind of black-and-white comparison. Writers such as William of Jumièges, Amatus of Monte Cassino or William of Apulia play up the Norman rulers' or leaders' competitiveness towards the emperor, and the readiness of Norman warriors to rebel against him.[30] Scandinavian saga-writers and scalds, in contrast, tend to highlight the northerners' loyalty and devoted service for the emperor: even the fame-seeking Hardraada competes with and outwits a rival commander, 'Gyrgir' (i.e. George Maniaces), rather than the emperor himself. However, these self-images should not be taken entirely at face-value, and some nuancing is in order. For in fact the first substantial unit of Franks was recruited into Byzantine service by traditional, diplomatic, means. The Normans – a term which will henceforth be used interchangeably with Frank – are said to have been despatched to the expeditionary force bound for Sicily by Prince Guaimar V of Salerno, at the request of the expedition's commander, George Maniaces.[31] Such recruiting of local 'allies', whether by the central government or the commander on the spot, was not uncommon on the eve of major offensives intended to bring about the annexation of land.[32] The invasion force of 1038 also contained Rus, Scandinavians, so-called 'Lombards' from northern Italy, and men from Apulia and Calabria who had presumably been enlisted directly by the Byzantine authorities. In fact, the Normans were not particularly significant in terms of numbers. There were three hundred of them, according to Amatus of Monte Cassino, serving under their own commander, a son of Tancred de Hauteville, William Iron-Arm, newly arrived from Normandy together with his brother Drogo.[33]

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Hanover/Leipzig 1917, 196, *schol.* 83 (84); cf. 154; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, tr. S. Laing, rev. by P. Foote, London 1961, 165, 172, 178; P. Grierson, 'Harold Hardraada and Byzantine Coin Types in Denmark', *Byzantinische Forschungen* i, 1966, 132–8. On the paucity of finds of Byzantine gold coins in Scandinavia, see C. Morrisson, 'Le rôle des Varanges dans la transmission de la monnaie byzantine en Scandinavie', *Les pays du nord et Byzance (Scandinavie et Byzance), Actes du colloque nordique et international de byzantinologie*, Uppsala 1981, 134, 136.

[30] Jumièges, 112–13 relays motifs purporting to illustrate Duke Robert's dignified bearing, self-restraint and lack of greed and resourcefulness vis-à-vis the Greeks. Their origin – before being incorporated into the 'B-redaction' of Jumièges' text – is unknown. They also appear in some sagas' versions of the visits of Harald Hardraada and King Sigurd of Norway to Byzantium: van Houts, 545–7. On the self-image of courage and greed for material gain propounded in writings from Norman milieux, see J. Bliese, 'The Courage of the Normans', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* xxxv, 1991, 10–11, 15–16.

[31] Amatus, 66–7; Malaterra, ed. Pontieri, 10; Leo Marsicanus, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, ed. H. Hoffmann, *MGH SS*, xxxiv, Hanover 1980, 298; W. Felix, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 1981, 208.

[32] For example, in 1045 Constantine IX obtained the assistance of Abul-Aswar, emir of Dvin, for the final campaign against the Armenian royal capital, Ani; Scylitzes, 436; V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, London 1953, 52–3.

[33] Amatus, 67; Leo Marsicanus, 298. Scylitzes' claim (p. 425) that five hundred 'Franks' had been recruited by Maniaces directly 'from Transalpine Gaul' is questionable, although not utterly inconceivable. It could reflect the recruiting efforts of his successors in Italy, for example John Raphael, a few years later. See below, 289.

We shall not attempt a collation of the Greek accounts of the Sicilian expedition with the Norman ones: Geoffrey Malaterra focuses on the Normans' role, and depicts them as reconquering eastern Sicily virtually single-handed. One may, however, note two features of the campaign. Firstly, the Normans appear to have fought as cavalry, since they took part in the battle of Troina at which the imperial mounted forces charged the enemy position in three battle-lines (*tres acies*). The horses' legs were protected with coverings of iron platelets against the caltrops (*tribuli*) which the Arabs had laid around their camp.[34] Thus from the first, the Normans seem to have been serving in the capacity for which they were to become famous; at this early stage, though, they would have been far outnumbered by the Byzantines' own cavalry. The second, and more celebrated, feature of the campaign is the Normans' quarrel with the Byzantine military authorities, apparently over their pay as well as over the division of spoils after the battle of Troina. It should however, be noted that there is no specific evidence of overt trouble between the Normans and the Byzantines before the battle of Troina early in 1040, almost two years after the landing on Sicily. And the aggression seems to have come from the Byzantine general, Maniaces, not from the Normans. Maniaces is said to have had beaten around the camp Arduin, a man of north Italian stock but conversant with Greek (in contrast to the newcomers from Normandy). In his capacity as spokesman for, and a commander of, the Normans, he had presumed to complain about their lack of prizes after Troina.[35] There is ample evidence that Maniaces' behaviour was violent and intemperate towards fellow-Byzantines as well as towards foreign troops. He inflicted a beating on his fleet-comander, Stephen, publicly insulting him, and even the Scandinavians seem to have been uncharacteristically restive. Harald Hardraada, who commanded a five-hundred-man strong Scandinavian unit, is represented in the *Heimskringla* as being continually at odds with Maniaces.[36] Moreover, not all the Normans withdrew from the expeditionary force in the company of Arduin, Drogo and William Iron-Arm, and it may be that Norman writers and one of Scylitzes' sources exaggerate the seriousness of the quarrel over booty and the scale of the Normans' withdrawal.[37] For it seems that enough warriors stayed

[34] Nilus, *Vita S. Philareti, Acta Sanctorum*, April, i, col. 608; Felix, 210. The Normans' role in the battle is underscored by Malaterra, 11. His claim should not be dismissed out of hand, for according to the disinterested Nilus (col. 608), the Arabs proved unable to endure even the first impact of the imperial forces' assault; this description, general as it is, may perhaps foreshadow the later, more celebrated, accounts of the Normans' charge. See also Anonymus Vaticanus, *Historia Sicula, RIS*, viii, col. 749.

[35] Amatus, 72–3; Malaterra, 11–12; William of Apulia, 110–11; Scylitzes, 426. For Arduin, see *Dizionario biographico degli Italiani*, iv, Rome 1962, 60–1 (R. Manselli); Felix, 210–11; W. Jahn, *Untersuchungen zur normannischen Herrschaft in Süditalien (1040–1100)*, Frankfurt am Main 1989, 25–9.

[36] Scylitzes, 406; *Heimskringla*, tr. Laing and Foote, 163–4. The *Heimskringla's* credibility at this point is reinforced by its mention of the departure of the 'Latin men' (p.164). The figure for the size of Harald's contingent is given by Cecaumenus, 282. On the harshness of Maniaces' treatment of the Apulians in 1042, see V. von Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1967, 59, 91.

[37] Hervé is said to have campaigned with Maniaces in Sicily and to have stayed in 'Roman' service thereafter: Scylitzes, 484; cf. J. Shepard, 'Byzantium's Last Sicilian Expedition: Scylitzes' testimony', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, ns 14–16 (xxiv–xxvi), 1977–79, 152, n.1.

behind to form the core of a unit which was still called the 'Maniakatoi' (after Maniaces) forty years later.[38]

These considerations do not drain the Normans' self-image of all validity. They had already proved to be self-willed as warriors in the service of the princes of Salerno, and Prince Guaimar is said by Malaterra to have been delighted to send off the three hundred in response to Maniaces' request for aid.[39] And in being prepared formally to protest about booty and pay, the Normans were behaving differently from almost all the other allied forces in Byzantine service known to us. It must, however, be remembered that the Normans were approaching Byzantium by a different direction from that of most other foreign soldiers of the *basileus*. For although supplied by a satellite ruler at the Byzantines' request, the Normans were not his native subjects and they had been employed by him primarily as mercenaries.[40] Money and material rewards might be expected to have weighed heavily with them, and thus they were soldiers of fortune, of a cast which the Byzantines had seldom encountered before. Unlike the Russo-Scandinavians, they hailed from, or had hired themselves out in, regions where coin was a not insignificant means of remuneration for goods and services.[41] And they presumably expected to be paid thus by their Byzantine employers. We have no precise evidence of the form or extent which Maniaces' payments to them took, but according to Scylitzes they were paid a monthly 'wage' (*siteresion*), and it was upon their failure to receive this 'pay for their labours' that they

[38] The 'Maniakatoi' are attested as a unit consisting of 'Franks from Italy', recruited by George Maniaces and still operational in the 1070s. However, our earliest – late eleventh-century – source about them is inaccurate in several respects, for example, representing the dispute as one between the Franks and Maniaces' successor, thereby exonerating Maniaces from responsibility for it: Scylitzes Continuatus, ed. Tsolakes, 167; Shepard, 'Sicilian Expedition', 151–2. It is very probable that some of the Franks recruited by Maniaces stayed in the Byzantines' service indefinitely, but there is no explicit evidence that they or other Normans took part in the rebellion which he mounted upon returning to Italy in 1042. He is depicted by William of Apulia (pp. 126–7) as trying unsuccessfully to recruit Argyrus and the Normans to his cause at that time. The tenuous or non-existent nature of some of the unit's soldiers' links with the famed general may have become blurred over time; after a substantial influx of Franks into imperial service in 1047, the prestigious label may have been extended to distinguish all those Franks already in the imperial service. The warriors of the 1070s may have been their sons, nephews or other kinsmen. See also Bryennius, 268–9; Anna Comnena, ii, 117; Ahrweiler, *Recherches*, 34, n.10.
[39] Malaterra, 10.
[40] While William and Drogo had only arrived at Guaimar's court shortly beforehand (Amatus, 67; Leo Marsicanus, 298), other Norman warriors had been in the employ of the princes of Salerno and other southern Italian potentates since the 1020s, if not earlier: F. Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, i, Paris 1907, 57–8, 67; E. Pontieri, *I normanni nell' Italia meridionale*, Naples n.d., 93; S. Tramontana, *I normanni in Italia*, Messina 1970, 125–31; H. Hoffmann, 'Die Anfänge der Normannen in Süditalien', *QF* xlix, 1969, 130–1, 143; R. Bunemann, 'Roberto il Guiscardo, *terror mundi*', *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, Serie iv, 12–13, 1986–87, 9–10; Jahn, 22–3; J. France, 'The Occasion of the Coming of the Normans to Southern Italy', *Journal of Medieval History* xvii, 1991, 201–02. For the last-mentioned reference I am grateful to Matthew Bennett.
[41] D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, London 1982, 96–7; P. Grierson, 'The Salernitan Coinage of Gisulf II (1052–1077) and Robert Guiscard (1077–1085)', *Papers of the British School at Rome* xxiv, 1956, 37–8, 59; idem, 'Monete bizantine in Italia dal VII all' XI secolo', *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo* viii, 1961, 42, 54–5; A. Guillou *et al.*, *Il mezzogiorno dai bizantini a Federico II* (*Storia d'Italia*, iii), Turin 1983, 66–7; J.M. Martin, 'Economia naturale ed economia monetaria . . .', *Storia d'Italia. Annali*, vi, *Economia naturale, economia monetaria*, Turin 1983, 197–202.

complained.[42] If (as is likely) they were serving as heavy cavalry, and if they had to meet out of their own pockets some of the running expenses of their horses and equipment – for example, the iron platelets for the horses' legs at Troina – then matters of payment or rights to some plunder would, understandably, have been of quite pressing concern to them. Conversely, Maniaces, after nearly two years' slow advance through siege warfare in a theatre remote from the central government, may well have been unable to provide payment in a form customary to the Normans, such as money.

This, the first appearance of the Normans in imperial Byzantine service, seems to have been quite fortuitous and, in the literal, geographical sense, peripheral. But if William de Hauteville and his companions happened to form a small component in one of the last of Byzantium's expansionist expeditions, other Franks soon became embroiled in the internal strife of the empire. For the overriding fear of mid-eleventh-century emperors was of *coups d'état* by their own generals. In fact, George Maniaces, the commander who recruited the first discernible intake of Normans into Byzantine service, rebelled in 1042–3. And it is during another military revolt, that of Leo Tornicius in 1047, that we first hear of Franks operating in the capital, Constantinople. The earliest firmly datable instances of the term *misthophoroi/-phorikon* ('wage-receivers/-ing') occur, so far as I know, only from this time onwards.[43] The arrival of the Franks in Byzantine service may well have contributed to the coining of the term, or rather, to its re-striking, in that *misthophoros* means 'mercenary' in classical writers such as Thucydides and Polybius, who were known to educated eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantines.[44]

What seems to be the earliest Byzantine reference to a sizable contingent of Franks recruited from the west directly to serve the emperor expressly associates them with money. John Mauropous celebrated in an oration the suppression by Constantine IX Monomachus of Tornicius' rebellion. The rebellion finally collapsed with the capture of Tornicius shortly before Christmas, 1047, and the oration itself was delivered on 30 December of the same year. The emperor is said to have sent for 'barbarian armies from the west and the north'; upon the arrival of the western army, which is described as having been 'abroad' (*hyperorion*), 'the emperor added strength to the hands of them all [i.e. all those in the western army] with great gifts and splendours of titles and all sorts of other kindnesses,

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[42] There may well have been discontent over both pay and the distribution of booty; the Latin sources focus only upon the latter issue: Scylitzes, 426. *siteresion* is a term used by Cecaumenus, 276, meaning a regular monthly stipend, distinct from *khortasmata*, 'feed', and *roga*, probably an annual lump sum. Cecaumenus, however, is referring to foreign-born and Byzantine bodyguards of the emperor, rather than to field-troops on campaign, and his usage may not be identical to Scylitzes'. See also Ahrweiler, *Recherches*, 8, n. 2; 12, n. 3.

[43] The earliest instance of all known to me comes in the oration of John Mauropous discussed below and delivered on 30 December 1047: *Quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt*, ed. P. de Lagarde, *Abhandlungen der historisch-philologischen Classe der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* xxviii, 1882, repr. Amsterdam 1979, 188. See also Attaleiates, 122, 127, 146, 148, 156 (denoting, *inter alios*, Germans and steppe-nomads). As these examples indicate, the Franks were by no means the only foreign warriors to be hired by the government in the mid-eleventh century. They do, however, seem to have been the most prominent.

[44] See above, n. 28. See also G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena*, Oxford 1929, 205–06, 488: A.P. Kazhdan and A.W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley/London 1985, 138.

but above all else he filled [their hands] up with gold; for this people is outstandingly fond of money (*philochrēmaton*)! Thus he sends them off most quickly, eager to the combat, having given them excellent instructions on what must be done, and provided them with the best of his generals as their commanders'.[45] This combat-ready host from the west is not identified by an ethnic name, but its obvious provenance is from somewhere in southern or south-central Italy and it most probably consisted mainly of Normans or other scions of Francia.[46] It appears to have been won over with lavish promises of money.[47] The men making up this force seem to have been fairly numerous, in that they comprise a whole unit in the emperor's strategy of encircling the rebel general's army, and several Byzantine generals need to be placed in command of them. There were probably already some Normans at Constantinople, veterans of Maniaces' campaign or associates of the Italian-born magnate, Argyrus, who had been summoned from Bari to Constantinople a year or two earlier. Argyrus is said by a chronicle composed in his native Bari to have led out 'some Franks and Greeks' from the city-walls during Tornicius' siege in late September/early October, 1047.[48] But

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[45] Mauropous, ed. de Lagarde, 192. See divergent views in J. Shepard, 'John Mauropous, Leo Tornicius and an alleged Russian army . . .', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* xxiv, 1975, 62–3, 89; A.P. Kazhdan, 'Once more about the "alleged" Russo-Byzantine Treaty and the Pecheneg Crossing of the Danube', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* xxvi, 1977, 66–70.

[46] The very small proportion of non-Norman knights from southern Italy or, indeed, of knights from elsewhere in Italy known to have gone on the First Crusade and the *arrière-croisade*, suggests that the native Italian component would have been modest in mid-eleventh-century expeditionary forces, too: B. Figliuolo, 'Ancora sui normanni d'Italia alla prima crociata', *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* civ, 1986, 9–11, 13; cf. A.V. Murray, 'The Origins of the Frankish Nobility of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100–1118', *Mediterranean Historical Review* iv, 1989, 293. The role of a Bulgarian force 'sent for from the west' is prominent in Attaleiates, 29; but they scarcely constituted an army living 'over the border, abroad (*hyperorion*)'; nor did they have a notorious appetite for money. And, as Byzantine subjects, the emperor's furnishing of them with 'instructions' and 'the best of his generals' would scarcely have been worthy of mention in Mauropous' oration. Moreover, they engaged the rebels from the west, whereas Mauropous' western army seems to have been sent forth from the capital by Constantine IX.

[47] The 'greed' of northern and western 'barbarians' in general had been decried by Byzantine writers since the sixth century and the 'love of money' of the 'Franks', in particular, was noted by Emperor Maurice at the end of that century: *Strategikon*, ed. G.T. Dennis and German tr. E. Gamillscheg, Vienna 1981, 370–1. The 'Franks'' susceptibility to pecuniary offers on account of their greed is averred by Leo VI, who adds that he himself had observed the phenomenon in those who spent time in Italy and became 'barbarised': *Tactica*, cols 965, 968. The westerners' alleged preoccupation with money could reflect the fact that a monetary economy persisted in a more robust condition in Italy and parts of Francia than in most other areas; payments in coin were therefore more immediately useful to Italians and Franks than they were to 'barbarians' from lands lacking any regular circulation of money. See above, n.41.

[48] Anonymous of Bari, *Chronicon, RIS*, v. 151. Argyrus is credited with a conspicuous, if less heroic, role in the defence of the capital by Scylitzes, 440. The context for the incident mentioned in these two sources is the very beginning of Tornicius' overt revolt and thus before the arrival of armies 'from the west and the north'. Argyrus had employed Normans in his efforts to counter Maniaces' rebellion in southern Italy in 1042–43: William of Apulia, 124–9. Although he is said subsequently to have released these Normans from the imperial service (pp. 132–3), he probably retained contacts with leading Normans even after his move to Constantinople, and he could well have been instrumental in the summons of a force from the west in 1047. See also von Falkenhausen, 59–60, 94.

this incident is quite distinct from the arrival of 'the barbarian army' fresh from the west, later that autumn.

From this time onwards we encounter a series of mentions of western mercenaries in Byzantine and Armenian sources, together with some seals of leading individuals named in these sources. Taken together, they form quite a solid, coherent, bloc of evidence, and stand in contrast with the sources' silence about 'Franks' in the central government's forces before the later 1040s. At about the same time, the government re-armed 15,000 Pecheneg prisoners-of-war, sending them off to fight the Turks in the east; it also began to retain the services of Turkish chieftains and their war-bands.[49] The emperor, uncertain of his own generals' fidelity and facing an unexpected bout of turbulence on his eastern borders, was looking for seasoned and manipulable military manpower.

The evidence for the mid-eleventh century becomes ample enough to permit a sketch of the Normans' role during the first phase of their service at Byzantium. They seem to have been posted almost immediately to the eastern front, where as late as 1048–49 major offensive expeditions were being launched, in an attempt to pre-empt the Turks' raids. They were also deployed for purposes of defence, manning towns such as Manzikert against the raiders. But they do not seem to have constituted permanent garrison forces in towns in the eastern borderlands. The Franks, like the Scandinavians, are said to have been 'dispersed' in wintertime, presumably to live off the land.[50] This in turn suggests that, at least at first, they may not have required a constant heavy outlay from the central treasury.[51] More probably, they were a burden upon the hapless local population, and we may note that the exemption from the 'billetting' (*mitaton*) of foreign warriors was a privilege sought after by wealthy landowners such as large monasteries. Revenues could also be raised in cash on the spot for the benefit of the foreign troops, judging by a charter of 1060.[52] The places where we hear of the Normans being quartered in winter are in Asia minor, in the Armeniakon theme (i.e. province). Certain of their leaders were granted landed estates, and even castles,

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[49] Scylitzes, 460. For the employment of units of Turks and individual Turks from the mid-eleventh century onwards, see C.M. Brand, 'The Turkish Element in Byzantium, Eleventh/Twelfth Centuries', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xliii, 1989, 2–3.

[50] Scylitzes, 485, 394.

[51] Cecaumenus, writing in the mid-1070s with reference to the 1040s and earlier, maintains that foreign warriors were then content with fairly humble titles and served in exchange for basic necessities: *Strategikon*, ed. Litavrin, 280. He was polemicising and cannot be regarded as an unimpeachable authority (cf. Litavrin, n. 1138 on 579). However, it should be noted that his criticism is directed at the (in his view) excessively senior titles bestowed on certain non-royal foreign employees of the emperor, rather than at the inherently high expense of foreign-born warriors. He assures the emperor, 'if you like, I can bring you as many of these mercenaries (*ethnikoi*) as you wish for a bit of bread and some clothing' (ed. Litavrin, 278); these items, and the expectation of 'a few *nomismata* (*solidi*)' will ensure their faithful service (p. 278). Cecaumenus does raise the spectre of disloyalty, but as the consequence of over-promotion rather than under-payment. He is exercised by the promotion of non-royal foreigners to top commands. He may have been unduly confident of his ability to manage foreign mercenaries on minimal remuneration, but he does seem to have been drawing on empirical experience of the middle years of the century. See also below, 298.

[52] *Actes de Lavra*, i. ed. Lemerle *et al.*, 198. This seems to be the earliest extant charter to name 'Franks' among those *ethnikoi* who are not to be billetted, or to have revenues assigned to them. Charters of 1044 and 1049 for the Nea Mone on Chios mention only the Rus by name: K.N. Kanellakes, *Chiaka Analekta*, Athens 1890, 548, 551.

there.[53] It was presumably the government's intention that they should obtain a stake in the empire's well-being, and an interest in eventually settling down to a life of domesticity on their estates. The Armeniakon theme was over 1,500 kilometres from southern Italy, where other Normans were, in the 1050s, harrying the Byzantine authorities and beginning to threaten their key bases. The imperial government presumably felt confident of its ability to maintain control of the Frankish recipients of lands and castles. Various Armenian princes and their entourages received extensive landholdings and senior administrative posts in Cappadocia and also, in the mid-eleventh century, in the selfsame Armeniakon theme.[54] But there is no evidence that all the Frankish rank-and-file received land-grants to support them and the fact that they needed to be assigned winter-quarters suggests otherwise.

From the first, the Franks served primarily as cavalry, and their horses presumably remained with them in their winter-quarters through the period when pasturing was impossible. We can infer their mounted role from operations in which they engaged in 1049. They were included among 'the eastern regiments' which were transferred to the west to deal with hordes of Pechenegs who were on the rampage in the Balkans.[55] And they now had their own commander, whereas two years earlier they had been put under the command of Byzantine generals, according to John Mauropous. Hervé, or 'Erbebios ho Frangopōlos' (as he is termed on his Greek-language seal),[56] commanded the left wing of what is described as 'the Roman phalanx';[57] in reality, it probably consisted mainly of Hervé's fellow-Franks. The Byzantines were routed and a Byzantine chronicle relays the allegation that the commanders were the first to flee, being unable to bear the thundering of the horses' hooves. This is an implausible allegation, but it could convey an eye-witness' impression of the unusually loud noise created by a cavalry charge of a type hitherto unfamiliar even to Byzantine military men.[58] At any rate, the Franks' numbers would have been quite substantial, if they made up the left wing of the 'Roman' battle-line. The likelihood of this is enhanced by the

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[53] Scylitzes, 485, 490 (Hervé); Attaleiates, 125 (Crispin); Attaleiates, 199 (Roussel). It would not be surprising if these properties had some link with the imperial stud farms, on which see Constantine VII, *Three Treatises*, ed. Haldon, 184 (commentary). For Crispin's fortress, see below, 297.

[54] G. Dédéyan, 'L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XI siècle', *Byzantion* xlv, 1975, 78–85.

[55] Scylitzes, 467. They belonged to, if they did not themselves exclusively constitute, a unit or units called 'the fellow-countrymen' (*ta homoethnē*): 467. See also Ahrweiler, *Recherches*, 28, n. 7.

[56] Hervé's seal was published by G. Schlumberger, 'Deux chefs normands des armées byzantines au XI siècle', *Revue historique* xvi, 1881, 295; *idem, Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1884, 659–60. See below, 297.

[57] Scylitzes, 468.

[58] Scylitzes (468–9) claims that the only general to stand his ground was Catacalon Cecaumenus, implying that Hervé was among those who fled. The source of this section of the chronicle is a laudatory biography or memoirs of none other than Cecaumenus; so its allegations were distinctly subjective: J. Shepard, 'A Suspected Source of Scylitzes' Chronicle', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* xvi, 1992, 171–81. Even so, Cecaumenus could have been slanting to his own credit a generally observed incident from this battle. The Franks' charge which, according to Anna Comnena, 'could punch a hole through the walls of Babylon' (*Alexiad*, iii, ed. Leib, 115) was already regarded as remarkable by Psellus, writing of Crispin's showing in 1072: *Chronographia*, ii, ed. E. Renauld, Paris 1928, 170.

fact that there were, in 1057, two Frankish *tagmata* stationed at Coloneia, to the east of the Armeniakon theme.[59] At that same time, there were also Franks stationed in Constantinople, and assuming that a *tagma* contained at least five hundred men, one may suppose a minimum of, say, 1,500 Frankish fighting men in the Byzantine forces.[60]

Numbers such as these, which do not seem to strain the sources' testimony, could not be maintained for long without an intake of new blood. And in fact we find evidence of Byzantine recruiting efforts in the west in the wake of the arrival of 'the barbarian army' from there in 1047. Argyrus, the Italian-born official who had demonstrated his commitment to Constantine IX during Tornicius' siege of the capital, was sent back to southern Italy in 1051, at least partly in order to recruit Norman mercenaries. According to William of Apulia, Argyrus offered the Normans 'quantities of money, much silver, precious garments and gold', if they would cross over to the Byzantines, who were 'engaged in grave struggle against the Persians [i.e. the Turks]'.[61] The same invocation of warfare against the Moslems to the east was made by a Byzantine embassy to Duke William of Normandy not very long afterwards and, as we have seen, the Normans were principally employed on the eastern front during the first phase of their service in Byzantium.[62] The Byzantine embassy to William was trying to raise troops, and thus we see Byzantium continuing to use traditional, 'diplomatic' channels to recruit what could have been termed an 'allied' force. William of Apulia claims that Argyrus' recruiting efforts were a total failure: the Normans were well-aware that his ulterior purpose was to induce them to give up the imperial territories which they had seized in southern Italy. But it is questionable whether all the 'counts' whom Argyrus approached with promises of money were as unresponsive as William claims: for it was probably to a large extent from southern Italy that the numbers of the Franks at Byzantium were replenished. It is anyway noteworthy that the target of these two relatively well-attested attempts at recruiting was Normans. There is indirect evidence suggesting that in the 1040s a military commander in southern Italy, John Raphael, was attempting, with apparent success, to gain recruits for his 'Varangian' contingent through the good offices of Edward the Confessor in Winchester.[63] And by the late 1060s, if not

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[59] Scylitzes, 490.

[60] Ahrweiler (*Recherches*, 26) stresses that *tagmata* varied between one another in size and that the numbers of a given *tagma* may have fluctuated over time; moreover, figures for the sizes of *tagmata* are few, and not necessarily reliable. Nonetheless, the tenth-century works on strategy seem to assume a complement of at least five hundred men in a *tagma*, and the three hundred Franks whom Hervé roused to revolt formed only part of the contingent quartered in the district (Scylitzes, 485). So an estimate of at least five hundred men *per* unit does not seem overblown.

[61] William of Apulia, 134–5.

[62] *Gesta Guillelmi*, 144–5.

[63] It seems more likely that the seal of John Raphael excavated in Winchester arrived while he was commanding 'Varangians' in Italy, rather than at some later date. The seal was struck while he was *prōtospatharios epi tou theophylaktou koitōnos kai ek prosōpou tou pantheou*, before he took up the post of '*katepano*' of Italia' in autumn, 1046: Anonymous of Bari, 151; V. Laurent, 'Byzance et l'Angleterre au lendemain de la conquête normande', *The Numismatic Circular* lxxi, 1963, no. 5, pp. 93–6. von Falkenhausen (92–3) suggests that the seal validated a document brought back by a returning veteran. This is very possible, but the location of the find – in an important royal administrative centre – suggests that the document had been despatched for some specific purpose. That Edward the Confessor may have received an enamelled cross-encolpion

earlier, significant quantities of Germans (known to the Byzantines by their Slavic name, Nemitzoi) were serving in Asia minor, presumably with the approval of the royal authorities in Germany.[64]

It is, however, probably not an accident of source-survival or merely a reflection of the Normans' penchant for magnifying their self-importance and their duke's international standing, that our clearest-cut evidence of mid-eleventh Byzantine recruiting efforts in the west concerns these warriors. For William of Apulia was, paradoxically, doing less than justice to the positive qualities of the Normans which attracted the Byzantines' attention. Undoubtedly, there was the calculation that the more Normans syphoned out of Italy, the fewer would remain to pare away at the empire's outposts there; this was a variant of the 'divide-and-rule' diplomacy which Byzantium had long been practising. And the sheer need for serviceable warriors of any stripe is suggested by the sudden re-armament of the 15,000 Pechenegs who had been settled as farmers in the Balkans. Nonetheless, there are indications that the Normans' martial qualities – of leadership and ingenuity, as well as courage – made an immediate impact upon their Levantine hosts, to the point of becoming almost proverbial. Soon, they were serving as a prop in ceremonial displays of majesty. One may glance at four illustrations of this, none of them particularly obscure, but seldom considered in light of the fact that they are all set within the first ten years or so of the Normans' arrival at Byzantium in force.

In 1054, a 'Frank' – a bachelor and apparently an ordinary rank-and-file soldier – volunteered to slip out of the town of Manzikert and to destroy a Turkish ballista which had been bombarding the walls with huge rocks. It was the man's resourcefulness and initiative that excited the admiration of Matthew of Edessa. The Frank is said to have asked for a strong and fearless horse, 'put on his coat of mail and placed his helmet on his head. Taking a letter, he attached it to the end of his spear . . . [as if] he were a courier'. He rode towards the Turkish camp, halted by the ballista, pretending to admire it, and then suddenly pulled out three bottles full of naphtha ('Greek Fire'), one by one, and threw them against the machine from three different sides. He rode '[quick] as an eagle' around the ballista, according to the Armenian chronicler, and the machine was reduced to ashes. The Frank was summoned to Constantinople where the emperor rewarded him with gifts and a senior title.[65]

A few years later, a Frankish commander named Randolph distinguished himself fighting with the forces loyal to Michael VI against a major, and successful, military rising. He alone stood his ground when the imperial troops turned to flee. He wandered into the thick of the fray, looking for a man of note with whom to do

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from the *basileus* was proposed, on the basis of suggestive antiquarian evidence, by K. Ciggaar, 'England and Byzantium on the Eve of the Norman Conquest', *ante* v, 1982, 91–5.

[64] Germans, including noble or illustrious ones, were serving on Romanus IV's campaign in 1069 (Attaleiates, 125), and they could act as cavalry (Attaleiates, 146–7). See also A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Komnenen*, Munich 1965, 51.

[65] Matthew of Edessa, tr. Dostourian (as in n.18), 140–2. A similar account is provided by Attaleiates (46–7). The two versions probably draw independently upon a widely circulating tale of 'derring do'; the tale equally probably recorded an actual event, observed from the walls of Manzikert by a medley of witnesses. See also R. Janin, 'Les "Francs" au service des byzantins', *Echos d'Orient* xxix, 1930, 64.

battle. 'And when he learnt that Nicephorus Botaneiates [a senior rebel commander] was roaming about . . . he went in quest of him, crying out from afar and enjoining him to wait and declaring his name, who he might be and for what purpose he was summoning him'. Botaneiates obliged and they fought in single combat with swords. Randolph's shield was cut in half, while his sword failed to damage Botaneiates' helmet. He was taken prisoner and brought before the leader of the rebellion. It appears that, at least at this dying stage of the battle, he was fighting on foot.[66] Randolph, who held the court title of *patrikios*, thus excited the admiration of the military man who is the ultimate source of this story.[67] Another, rather less anecdotal, instance of admiration for individual Normans comes from the historian Michael Attaleiates. We are told that after repeated defeats at the hands of the Pechenegs in pitched battles, Constantine IX, 'despairing of the unmanliness of his generals' and of their 'folly' in matters of strategy and tactics, posted troops to various forts and put in command of them a 'Latin', 'a splendid man in moments of crisis and second to none in realising what must be done'.[68] The commander, who may well be identifiable as Hervé,[69] would together with his men observe the nomads' movements, only sallying forth from the towns to surprise them when the nomads were scattered and pillaging the surrounding countryside. In this way, they recovered much of the booty, killing or capturing many of the nomads, and they are said to have put an end to the continual raiding. Thus a westerner was, after probably no more than a dozen years' service at most, put in charge of Byzantine troops for a major operation. In part, the appointment may reflect Constantine's distrust of his own generals rather than their 'unmanliness', and Attaleiates may be simplifying matters in order to hold up an ideal foreign-born general to his Byzantine readers.[70] But the command is also a tribute to the positive qualities of initiative and adaptability which such men as this 'Latin' and Randolph really did display. The track-and-destroy tactics against the Pechenegs were quite different from the pitched battles in which the Normans had shown their mettle hitherto. It is partly due to such leadership qualities that we are far better-informed about the Norman commanders than we are about the names and circumstances of virtually any other foreign-born commanders since the early Byzantine empire.

A final example of the Normans' instant celebrity at Byzantium brings us into the sphere of literary topoi and imperial, or rather, mock-imperial, ceremonial. Michael Psellus offers an eye-witness account of the reception which the rebel general Isaac Comnenus accorded him and his fellow-emissaries from Emperor

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[66] Scylitzes, 495–6. The witness of Codex Ambrosianus C279 inf. at p.496. 68 is preferable to that of all the other manuscripts; for it alone is consistent with what has been stated earlier in the text: that Botaneiates was serving on the rebels' side, *against* the emperor Michael VI (488–9).
[67] Above, n. 58.
[68] Attaleiates, 35.
[69] Hervé was then the leading Frank in Byzantium, and he was a commander during operations against the Pechenegs in 1049: Scylitzes, 468–9. However, that there were other Franks in senior positions is indicated by the seals of 'Ounpertos': see below, n. 127.
[70] The 'Latin' was not put in supreme command, a post given to Bryennius the *patrikios* who also, under his title of 'ethnarch', took charge of all the Frankish and Russo-Scandinavian contingents: Scylitzes, 471. The 'Latin' seems thus to have been temporarily detached from his compatriots. Bryennius' loyalty proved to be less than total: immediately after Constantine IX's death, he tried to seize the throne for himself, Scylitzes, 479; Cheynet, 66.

Michael VI in 1057. The reception in the rebel camp was intended to impress upon them the legitimacy of the rebel cause. Around Isaac were arrayed guards of honour fit for an emperor: the outer ring of guards consisted of 'Italians' (who can, in the context, hardly be other than Normans[71]) and 'Tauroscyths', i.e. Russians or Russo-Scandinavians. Psellus' description may not be particularly familiar to western medievalists and so it seems worth recalling the details. They correspond in most respects with other Byzantine allusions to Frankish warriors and to the representations in sagas and other sources of Russo-Scandinavian warriors' deportment during the Viking Age. According to Psellus, the Normans and the Russians were fearsome-looking: 'both glaring fiercely, but the one people [i.e. the Normans] painting themselves and plucking their eyelashes while the others [i.e. the Russians] retained their natural looks; the former impulsive in their charges (*tais hormais*), mercurial and impetuous, the latter manic and full of bile; those [i.e. the Normans] irresistible in the first shock of their charge, but soon losing their momentum, the others [i.e. the Russians] less violent in rushing forwards but unsparing of their blood and having no regard at all for their wounds'.[72] These warriors are said to have 'supported' their one-edged battle-axes on their shoulders and to have held out the shafts of their 'lengthy lances (*epimēkē dorata*)' in such a way as to form a kind of 'roof' over the spaces between them. This description forms part of an elaborate literary set-piece which draws on various stereotypes of an emperor holding court and is devised with considerable artifice.[73] While it cannot be regarded as a photographic recollection of an event, the most wilful distortions are those involving Psellus' own role in the proceedings.

Three brief remarks must do duty for the fuller discussion which Psellus' description warrants. Firstly, although his wording could be taken to mean that each warrior brandished both lance and battle-axe, he seems to indicate that the axe was merely rested on the shoulder rather than being borne in a holster or with straps in such a way as to leave both hands free. A warrior holding a battle-axe would scarcely have been able to hold out a 'lengthy' lance in a dignified fashion, even if he were able to grasp his battle-axe with just one hand. In other words, each warrior was wielding only one of these weapons. Battle-axes were the most characteristic weapon of the Russo-Scandinavian, and later of the Anglo-Saxon warriors at Byzantium, and axe-bearers are pictured, albeit anachronistically, as guarding the palace in an illustrated chronicle.[74] So it is most probable that the

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[71] J. Hermans, 'The Byzantine View of the Normans – another Norman Myth?', *ante* ii, 1979, 85.
[72] Psellus, i, ed. Renauld, 97.
[73] R. Beaton, ' "*De vulgari eloquentia*" in Twelfth-century Byzantium', *Byzantium and the West, c.850–1200*, ed. J.D. Howard-Johnston, Amsterdam 1988, 261–2.
[74] They are depicted in an early ninth-century scene by the twelfth-century Norman Sicilian manuscript of Scylitzes' chronicle: A. Grabar and E. Manousaka, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Scylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid*, Venice 1979, fig. 10 (fol. 26va); p. 31. Cf. Blöndal and Benedikz, 183; P. Schreiner, 'Zur Ausrüstung des Kriegers in Byzanz, dem Kiever Russland und Nordeuropa nach bildlichen und literarischen Quellen', *Les pays du nord et Byzance (Scandinavie et Byzance)*, *Actes du colloque nordique et international de byzantinologie*, Uppsala 1981, 235–6. According to Psellus (ii, 90–1) 'not more than four' Russians ('Tauroscyths') penned Isaac Comnenus in with their spears, holding him to his seat in the cavalry battle at Petroe in 1057. But it is very unlikely that they could have managed this if they, too, were mounted, *pace* Blöndal and Benedikz, 108, 183. Russians had been using spears while on horseback since at least the tenth century: *Russian Primary Chronicle*, tr. S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge,

'Tauroscyths' – probably, in this context, mainly Russians – carried the axes, while overhead arched lances were held by the Normans. Presumably the lances were, in 1057, regarded as the Normans' most distinctive weapon.[75]

Secondly, the characterisation of westerners as irresistible in their first onrush but lacking in staying-power is also to be found in Anna Comnena.[76] The impact of 'the Franks" charge, on horseback or on foot, and their limited stamina, are themes of Byzantine military manuals from the sixth century onwards, but they should not for that reason be discounted.[77] After all, no Late Antique stereotype for the Russians was available to Psellus and it could well be that he was representing, albeit in caricature, the tactics actually practised by western warriors at Byzantium in the mid-eleventh century. He shows awareness of the impact of their charge in relating Crispin's destruction of his opponents' battle-line.[78] It is not impossible that Psellus' description conveys a layman's impression of the halts and *volte-faces* which use of the couched lance involved. There is reason to suppose that this technique was being practised by the Franks in Byzantium before the early 1070s; for at that time a systematic attempt to introduce – or re-introduce – Byzantine cavalrymen to it seems to have been undertaken, presumably under Frankish inspiration.[79] Both Psellus' experience of his reception in Isaac Comnenus' giant tent and his pen-portrait of the incident some years later belong to a time when attempts to convert the lance into a kind of mobile battering-ram were still, in all probability, experimental and variegated.[80]

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Mass., 1953, 80. But it was as 'axe-bearers' that they, the Scandinavians and, later, the Anglo-Saxons were best known to the Byzantines, e.g. Psellus, i, ed. E. Renauld, Paris 1926, 118; cf. T.G. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung*, Vienna 1988, 165–6; line-drawing, 169: 4.

[75] The lance of the Normans has been estimated as 'between nine and eleven feet in length': I. Peirce, 'Arms, Armour and Warfare in the Eleventh Century', *ante* x, 1988, 244. It should be noted that Byzantine heavy cavalry were, in the tenth and presumably the eleventh century/ies, equipped with lances 3.75 metres in length, apparently for purposes of throwing: Kolias, 192.

[76] Anna Comnena, iii, ed. Leib, 28. See also above, n.58. Anna's theme of the westerners' charge, although formidable, could be broken up by Byzantine ingenuity and resolve is illustrated by, for example, her tale of the repulse of Crusaders marauding outside the walls of Constantinople: Anna Comnena, ii, ed. Leib, 223–4, 226. The eventual fatigue of the Franks' horses (albeit after allegedly 'climbing and descending many mountain ridges') is an important element in an anecdote of Attaleiates, 190–1.

[77] Maurice, *Strategikon*, 368–71; Leo VI, *Tactica*, cols 965–8.

[78] Psellus, ii, 170. Only Crispin is singled out by name, but 'those around him' whom he led in the charge seem most likely to have been Franks under his command.

[79] According to Bryennius (264–7), Nicephoritzes, logothete of the Drome in the aftermath of Manzikert, set about trying to form a new élite regiment. After learning how to maintain a firm seat on their horses, the men were trained to charge full-tilt at one another in opposing 'squadrons' and to hit one another as hard as possible with untipped lances. Those who consistently showed courage in this were chosen to form the 'phalanx of the Immortals'. This exercise, in which a premium was placed on the impetus of the charge, and hence maximum impact of the lance, is most comprehensible if the lance was in a firmly fixed position. By the 1090s, Nicephorus Euphorbenus was 'taking in his arm' (*enagkalisamenos*) his lance and wielding it as expertly as a Norman. Anna's phraseology (ii, 197) suggests that Nicephorus' lance was fixed beneath his arm: Kolias, 207–08 and n. 128; above, 278. Bryennius and Anna were writing in the second quarter of the twelfth century, but they were not necessarily ignorant or anachronistic about the circumstances of late-eleventh-century warfare. Bryennius had been put in charge of Constantinople's walls at the time of the First Crusade, while Anna heard many stories from her father, and was keenly interested in tactics and weaponry.

[80] The two main ways of holding the couched lance are illustrated by D. Nicolle, 'The Impact of

Thirdly, and finally, Isaac Comnenus' reception for Psellus and his fellow emissaries was not merely a show of force involving fierce-looking aliens and their sometimes exotic equipment. It was also a show of legitimacy, in which a rebel general was trying to demonstrate possession of the hallmarks of an established imperial court.[81] The Russo-Scandinavians had regularly formed tbe bodyguard of emperors since the late tenth century whereas the Normans, if the foregoing arguments hold true, had only been serving in substantial quantities for ten years in 1057. Their presence in a quasi-imperial bodyguard is another indication that they rapidly gained a reputation for martial prowess and, even, trustworthiness in Byzantium.

'Trustworthiness' was not a quality of the Normans which received especial prominence from their propagandists and apologists, and in fact Byzantine writers do sometimes refer to the Franks as 'treacherous by nature'.[82] But Byzantine political life was itself riddled with distrust, not only the emperors' fear of rebellions by Byzantine-born commanders but also those commanders' misgivings about one another. The number of well-planned and partly or wholly executed bids for the throne by army officers was quite limited during the first two-thirds of the eleventh century.[83] But suspicion was rife and it was here that the *political* use of the Franks was considerable, from their role in the suppression of Tornicius' rebellion onwards. The rank-and-file did not have particular loyalties towards ambitious Byzantine generals and from an early stage they were allotted commanders of their own stock, such as Hervé. Thus they had little occasion to forge close personal ties with Byzantine officers.[84] The obstacle which this posed to disgruntled Byzantine generals is shown clearly in the biography or memoirs of one such general, Catacalon Cecaumenus, a key conspirator in the coup of 1057 – and not to be confused with the author of the *Strategikon*, whose surname was also Cecaumenus. He is said to have been particularly worried by the proximity to his country estate of two Frankish and one Russian regiment, in case they should learn of the plot, seize him and send him to the emperor in Constantinople.[85] His solution was to fabricate imperial letters instructing him to mobilise the regiments of the region. First, he suborned two native Byzantine regiments, taking the commanders aside individually and offering them a choice of participation in the rebellion or decapitation. He then applied the same

the European Couched Lance on Muslim Military Tradition', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society* x, 1980, plate III: E, F, p.19. See also *eundem, Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era 1050–1350*, i, New York 1988, 297; D.J.A. Ross, 'L'originalité de "Turoldus": le maniement de la lance', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* vi, 1963, 131–5 and figs 5–9; Peirce, 244–5; Kolias, 204–05, 208. It is worth noting an (undated) seal of a certain Tancred, whose reverse depicts him 'galloping to right and stomping with his horse a fallen enemy'; his right hand holds a long spear, *not* in the couched position, while his left holds an oval shield: G. Zacos and J.W. Nesbitt, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, ii, Berne 1984, 341 (no. 718); *Plates*, Berne 1985, plate 70.

[81] D. Smythe, 'Why do Barbarians stand round the Emperors at Diplomatic Receptions?', *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin, Aldershot 1992, 306–07, 312.

[82] Attaleiates, 125. The 'inconstancy' of the westerners, especially from the First Crusade onwards, is a leitmotif of Anna's *Alexiad*, e.g. ii, 206, 233; iii, 11, 16, 29.

[83] Cheynet, 36, 38, 40, 42–3, 48–9, 51, 54, 57–8, 59–61, 66, 68–70, 74.

[84] Hervé is termed 'commander of the *homoethnē*' by Scylitzes (467), referring to events in 1049. See above, n. 55.

[85] Scylitzes, 490. For Scylitzes' heavy reliance on the work relating Cecaumenus' feats, see Shepard, 'Suspected Source', 172–6.

approach to 'those from the barbarians'.[86] We are told that by this ploy he 'easily' terrified them into cooperating with him. It must have been men from these same regiments that provided the guard-of-honour of 'Italians' and 'Tauroscyths' in Isaac Comnenus' tent a few months later.

We should not suppose that the Normans' presumed loyalty towards the reigning emperor was wholly born of sentiment and gratitude for gifts and favours. Money had a good deal to do with it and, to that extent, the judgement of Lord Norwich and earlier historians has some merit.[87] The emperor was the Normans' paymaster, and while their monthly salary was disbursed by expeditionary force commanders on occasion, the more lucrative rewards came directly from the emperor, for example, the stipends and other gifts bestowed on senior court title-holders at Easter. The country estates of Norman commanders were presumably either granted to them directly by the emperor, or bought with money received from him.[88] We do not have much detailed information about the finances of Byzantine regiments, but it is clear that control of reserves of money or other valuables was essential for any rebellion starting out from the provinces. The dilemma of Leo Tornicius in 1047 was that he and his accomplices 'had to raise an army and had no money ready to hand, nor anything else to induce army commanders to join forces with them'. Other rebels, such as Bardas Sclerus, sought to alleviate their initial shortage of cash by seizing tax-collectors and their monies and then, in effect, attempting to raise taxes of their own.[89] And the personal liquid assets of Byzantine aristocrats and generals seem to have been quite limited.[90] It was, therefore, to the government that one looked for 'serious money'. And here, the Normans' very expectation of regular pay in coin – partly dictated by the cost of maintaining their armour, weapons and distinctive riding gear – was an advantage to the emperor. For provided he was able to pay them thus, they were unlikely to join in a military revolt: their commanders had virtually no prospect of mounting the throne themselves, whether by force of arms or invitation from the civilian 'establishment' inside Constantinople.[91] Neither were their pay disputes with the emperor likely to evoke widespread sympathy from Byzantine-born soldiers or from the local population in the provinces where they were quartered.[92] So even if they did take up arms from a sense

[86] Scylitzes, 491.

[87] Norwich, 339; above, 275.

[88] The 'abundant wealth' with which Roussel's wife ransomed him from the Turks may well have been earned as pay or prize money: Attaleiates, 192–3; Scylitzes Continuatus, 160. The possibility that she was rich in her own right cannot, however, be totally excluded.

[89] Psellus, ii, 17; Scylitzes, 316; Cheynet, 164–5.

[90] A few great families do seem to have disposed of sizeable quantities of coin, sufficient to maintain an army: J.-C. Cheynet, 'Fortune et puissance de l'aristocratie (X–XII siècle)', *Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire byzantin*, ii, *VIII–XV siècle*, ed. V. Kravari, J. Lefort and C. Morrisson, Paris 1991, 204–05. However, even for them the logistical problems of linking up their sometimes secluded hoards of coins or bullion with the soldiers were formidable.

[91] Roussel of Bailleul very probably did come to harbour imperial ambitions, but he was aware of the need to field a Byzantine-born candidate for the throne, Caesar John Ducas: only then could *Byzantine* troops be expected to rally to his cause: Attaleiates, 189–90; below, 300.

[92] The Normans who, under Arduin and other veterans of the Sicilian expedition, took to attacking the imperial authorities and to pillaging in Apulia in 1041–2 do not seem to have enjoyed much active support from the rural population: William of Apulia, 118–19; Cheynet, *Contestations*, 387 and nn. 34, 36.

of grievance over pay, this had more the character of a mutiny than a military rebellion, in that it had little chance of spreading throughout the army.

These were, I suggest, the considerations underlying the emperors' employment of western mercenaries in the mid-eleventh century and, so long as the money was to hand, the policy worked.[93] Yet we hear of three insurrections on the part of prominent Frankish commanders, Hervé, Crispin and Roussel: are not these an indictment of a policy formed by calculations of short-term political survival? A glance at each may suggest that while these outbursts showed up the risks of employing Franks as right-hand men, only the third of them posed a really serious threat to the government, and this in highly exceptional political and military circumstances.

The defection of Hervé, the talented commander of Frankish mercenaries in 1057, seems to have been a matter of offended dignity as well as greed. He was apparently indignant at the derisive way in which Michael VI turned down his request for a more senior title, at the same Eastertime rewards ceremonies at which Isaac Comnenus and Catacalon Cecaumenus failed to gain satisfaction for their demands and decided on rebellion. Hervé withdrew to his country estate, but induced only three hundred of the Frankish cavalrymen quartered there or nearby to join him. No less significantly, he is said to have been unaware of the conspiracy then being hatched by other Byzantine generals, including his neighbour in the Armeniakon theme, Catacalon Cecaumenus.[94] Presumably there was little trust, or social contact, between them and Hervé. The Frankish outsider turned instead to a Turcoman chieftain, Samuch, and they agreed to launch raids together on Byzantine territory from across the border. However, mutual suspicion between Franks and Turks ran high and while they were encamped near Khliat, by Lake Van, Samuch made a surprise attack on Hervé and his three hundred. The Franks defeated the Turks in battle, but were easy prey to treachery at the hands of the emir of Khliat, who was in league with his correligionist, Samuch. Hervé was captured and became the emir's prisoner, but subsequently he re-entered the

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[93] This proposition touches on the fundamental questions of whether western mercenaries gave value for money to the Byzantine state and of how much money – and other valuables – was spent on them. A systematic examination of them, while vitiated by lack of precise or reliable figures, might be inclined towards a positive evaluation by the following considerations: (1) mercenaries such as those who 'sailed through together with (*syndiapleusanton*)' Crispin, apparently all the way to Constantinople, would have been able to bring heavy gear such as armour, lances, firm saddles and, perhaps, horses with them: Attaleiates, 122. They would thus have spared the imperial treasury the expense of supplying these and, perhaps, of raising and training the horses. (See, however, M. Bennett, *supra*, 49–51 on the difficulty of transporting horses by sea). (2) The number of Frankish mercenaries may well have fluctuated markedly over time, rising from initially modest proportions to perhaps well over 3,000 in the reign of Romanus IV and then falling sharply during the reign of Nicephorus III Botaneiates (1078–81) and the earlier years of Alexius' reign. See below, 303. Seeing that quite small units of western cavalry often proved more than a match for much larger hosts of Turkish or Pecheneg light cavalry, they may well have been regarded as 'cost-effective', even if the monthly pay and the other cash benefits of each warrior were substantial. (3) There are clear indications of growth in the population and the economy of the empire through the eleventh century. If, as is quite possible, the central treasury was able to tap the expansion of the monetary economy, its controllers may well have regarded Normans 'outstandingly fond of money' as highly appropriate tools for the implementation of imperial policy. See A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900–1200*, Cambridge 1989, 264; above, 286; above, n. 51.
[94] Scylitzes, 484–5.

service of the empire and received a top military command. His lead seal seeks, in a standard Byzantine invocational formula, the Lord's help for 'thy servant Hervé Frangopolos *magistros*, *vestēs* and *stratelatēs* of the east'.[95] It had been the title of *magistros* that he had earlier sought unsuccessfully from Michael VI. The command of *stratelatēs* of the east put him in charge of Byzantine as well as Norman troops, for it seems to have involved supervision of all the eastern regiments. A recent predecessor had been Catacalon Cecaumenus.[96] Thus Hervé's secession seems to have been regarded by the imperial authorities as an impulsive act of vengeance, caused by frustration over rewards and recognition, rather than anything more premeditated. His seal signals his devotion to St Peter, who is shown *en buste* on the face of the seal. Such portrayals of St Peter are rare on Byzantine seals and this is an indication that Hervé retained the attachment of his fellow-Normans in the west to the saint. But Hervé was obviously no less intent on displaying the two successive court titles, *vestēs* and *magistros*, which he had received from the emperor, listing the most illustrious one first.[97]

A not dissimilar career pattern was followed by another commander, Robert Crispin. He had, according to Amatus of Monte Cassino, gone to Constantinople 'pour faire chevalerie souz lo pooir de lo Impereor'.[98] Within a few years – far more quickly than had been the case with Hervé – Crispin rebelled, apparently out of dissatisfaction with the titles and gifts he had received from Romanus IV Diogenes. He set upon tax-collectors whom he encountered and divested them of their monies, and began to plunder from other persons.[99] He was able to beat off successive attacks by Byzantine troops stationed nearby, and one of his assets was possession of a fortress standing 'on a lofty crest, hard to reduce', in the Armeniakon theme.[100] He and his men subsequently sought shelter there. This situation may seem to have ominous overtones of southern Italy, where the Normans had already shown their capacity to switch from being mercenaries to being predators and appropriators of strong points. But Crispin's rising, for all its vigour, did not last more than a few months, and it was isolated. Upon the mobilisation of a large army, led by Romanus IV himself, Crispin asked for an amnesty. The emperor granted it, reportedly 'on account of the nobility of the man and his renown for feats and deployments (*diataxeis*) in war'.[101] Romanus soon changed his mind, apparently because of allegations that Crispin's penitence was tactical, dictated by the absence of most of his comrades, whom he had left behind in his castle; he would, once the opportunity arose, 'make an attempt' upon the emperor. On these grounds, he was dismissed from the army. However,

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[95] Schlumberger, 'Chefs normands', 295; *idem, Sigillographie*, 659–60.

[96] Scylitzes, 467; cf. R. Guilland, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines*, i, Berlin-Amsterdam 1967, 389.

[97] Hervé's title guaranteed him a stipend of, apparently, sixteen pounds of gold a year, and a pre-eminent position in the ceremonial life of the imperial court: Oikonomides, 294; J.-C. Cheynet, 'Dévaluation des dignités et dévaluation monétaire dans la seconde moitié du XI siècle', *Byzantion* liii, 1983, 469, 474.

[98] Amatus, 15.

[99] Attaleiates, 123.

[100] Attaleiates, 125. The fortress is most likely to have been granted to Crispin by the government; for he would not have had the siege-equipment to capture it, or the time prerequisite for a blockade.

[101] Attaleiates, 124.

Attaleiates emphasises that Crispin's own case for his defence had not been clearly refuted, and the prosecution rested on suspicion and the vehement denunciation of a German noble.[102]

Attaleiates may have been predisposed in Crispin's favour, holding his soldierly virtues up as a model for 'Romans' to emulate. But Attaleiates was not alone in his appreciation. Within three years Crispin had been rehabilitated and restored to his former command. His fighting zeal was kindled with hopes of vengeance upon Romanus, who had now been declared deposed by his co-emperor at Constantinople, Michael VII Ducas. Michael had, after bringing him back from exile at Abydos, earned his good will by lavishing upon him the gifts and honours which Romanus had begrudged him.[103] Clearly material gain and self- esteem counted for much with Crispin, as with Hervé, but the episode also suggests that Crispin's animus was in many ways a personal one, aimed at an emperor who had been covetous and ungrateful – an unjust lord – and that it could readily be assuaged. Furthermore, Crispin seems to have been well-aware of his utility and value to his employers, and was adept at demonstrating it. He and a small band of companions dealt with 'a great host' of Turks shortly before his encounter and temporary reconciliation with Romanus. And he is said to have greatly raised the fighting spirit of 'the soldiers' – seemingly, Byzantine ones – upon joining them on the eve of battle.[104] This could well have made even a massive outlay on gifts and pay for Crispin appear 'cost-effective' to the imperial government, much as it may have annoyed Byzantine generals. Cecaumenus' warning of the resentment of 'Roman' officers at the appointment of foreigners to top commands may well have been inspired by the career of Crispin, which had been played out only a few years earlier.[105] Such resentment would not necessarily have been unwelcome to the emperor, since it reduced the likelihood of joint action between Byzantine rebels and foreign-born generals. And the latter, if aggrieved with their employer, could not count on support from Byzantine generals: Crispin's stand at his fortress, 'Black Castle' (Maurokastron), in 1069 had been a lonely one. Thus out of the Normans' material aspirations and desire for honours and the jealousy of some Byzantine generals a kind of political equilibrium could be struck. Michael Psellus could write of Crispin on the day of his death that, 'changing his ways, he subsequently showed himself as well-disposed as initially he had been inimical' towards the Byzantines.[106] Crispin presumably died in or near the Great Palace, for news of his death to reach Psellus so swiftly.

The aforementioned equilibrium was, however, already upset by the time Psellus wrote his brief obit note on Crispin in, probably, 1073. The defeat and capture of Romanus IV at Manzikert and his subsequent release by the Seljuk sultan, Alp Arslan, inaugurated a period of civil war, financial crisis and incursions by foreign marauders. Both Romanus IV and Michael VII could lay claim to be legitimate emperors, and neither was of long-established imperial lineage. In

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[102] Attaleiates, 125.
[103] Attaleiates, 170–1. According to Bryennius (134–5), Crispin's long-nurtured anger with Romanus spurred him into his precipitate charge against Romanus' battle-line in 1072.
[104] Attaleiates, 124–5, 171.
[105] Cecaumenus, 278. See above, n. 51.
[106] Psellus, ii, 170.

the aftermath of Manzikert Romanus was able to raise substantial quantities of additional troops quartered in provinces as far north and north-west as the Pontus, Paphlagonia and Bithynia.[107] And even after the defeat and blinding of Romanus in the summer of 1072, military units hostile to Michael VII's government remained operational, especially in Cilicia and Cappodocia.[108] Meanwhile, bands of Turcomans were on the rampage in Asia minor. In these turbulent conditions, Michael VII regarded the Normans as potential instruments of recovery. He tried repeatedly, and eventually successfully, to forge a marriage-tie with Robert Guiscard, who had captured Bari, Byzantium's last major base in Italy, in 1071. Michael's aim was, as a Byzantine chronicler put it, 'through them or with them [the Normans] to ward off their [the Turks'] extraordinary assault against Romania'.[109] Thus the individual fortune-seekers were, in Michael's plan, to be supplemented by 'allies' – soldiers sent or led by a cooperative ruler – in the traditional sense. However, now that Byzantium's eastern provinces lacked a modicum of political cohesion, the opportunities for a sustained rebellion by talented individuals and, even, the formation of self-sustaining principalities, were ripe. They were taken by Philaretus, Romanus IV's military governor in Marash. Being himself of Armenian stock, he used his affinities with the numerous Armenian immigrants in Cilicia to gain control of several other Cilician cities and later took over Edessa and Antioch.[110] The conditions of anarchy were not lost on another foreign-born commander, Roussel of Bailleul, and in 1073 – when negotiations for a marriage-tie between Michael VII's house and Guiscard's were under way – he abandoned the army sent out by Michael against the Turks and led off four hundred Frankish soldiers of the company which he had taken over from Crispin. It is alleged by one chronicler that he had long been planning his secession;[111] but even if this was the case, it is significant that he acted only when the Byzantine state's apparatus was in glaring disarray, and when even the ruling family of the Ducases was divided. The emperor's uncle, Caesar John

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[107] Attaleiates relates that Diogenes' troops compelled the soldiers dispersed by Michael VII's government in these provinces 'to become under him' (*genesthai hyph' heauton*): Attaleiates, 172–3.

[108] Among them were the Armenian duke of Antioch, Katachour and, most probably, Cappadocian units having longstanding affinities with Diogenes and his family: Cheynet, *Contestations*, 398, 407–08.

[109] Scylitzes Continuatus, ed. Tsolakes, 170. See H. Bibicou, 'Une page d'histoire diplomatique de Byzance au XI siècle: Michel VII Doukas, Robert Guiscard et la pension des dignitaires', *Byzantion* xxix–xxx, 1959–60, 44–9, 52–4; W.B. McQueen, 'Relations between the Normans and Byzantium 1071–1112', *Byzantion* lvi, 1986, 429–32.

[110] C.J. Yarnley, 'Philaretos – Armenian Bandit or Byzantine General?', *Revue des études arméniennes*, ns ix, 1972, 336–9, 342–9; Hoffmann, *Rudimente*, 5–10.

[111] Bryennius, 148–9. Roussel was accused of having chosen to disregard Romanus IV's orders to lead his Franks forward to join the advance-guard and attack the fortress of Khliat: Attaleiates, 148–9. This is one of a number of allegations levelled by Byzantine writers at senior commanders implicated in the débacle, and it should be treated with caution. Zonaras (ed. Büttner-Wobst, 699) states that Roussel was 'persuaded' to withdraw by a Byzantine commander, Tarchaneiotes. The incident may well have sprung from a tactical decision made by Roussel on the spur of the moment. He had shown similar independence of mind during the battle on the Cerami in 1063. He threatened never again to give 'aid' (*auxilium*) to Count Roger unless he agreed to a further assault on the numerically far superior Saracens: Malaterra, 43. Such a self-willed demeanour was not tantamount to premeditated rebellion.

Ducas, was debarred from government or a military command, upon suspicion that he might seize the throne for himself.

Roussel's rising, which has long attracted scholarly notice, would repay further study.[112] He, like Hervé, issued seals which give his family name as 'Frangopolos', a newly-coined term meaning, literally, 'son of a Frank'. Roussel's seal cites a single court-title, *vestes*; this was a dignity which had earlier been conferred on Hervé. The seal's face depicted the Mother of God, in a design common on contemporary Byzantine seals, and this could suggest some familiarity with, and public espousal of, Byzantine religious ways. Hervé's seal, in contrast, had depicted St Peter.[113] A systematic study would assess the significance of the fact that Roussel initially tried to impose himself upon Lykaonia and Galatia, well-populated and well-watered regions containing some extensive plains suitable for heavy cavalry yet far from Roussel's own properties in the Armeniakon theme.[114] His ambitions were clearly sweeping, in territorial terms, from the outset; but whether from the first he had designs on the imperial throne is uncertain. His capture in battle of Caesar John Ducas, who had been rehabilitated in order to lead an army against him, was fortuitous and his subsequent proclamation of John as emperor suggests skilful opportunism, exacerbating the rivalries and distrust within the Ducas family. It may only have been at this stage that he raised his own sights to the level of the throne.[115]

The imbroglio involving Caesar John cannot, however, be examined here, and discussion must be confined to one proposition: for capable but numerically restricted foreigners such as the companies of Normans in Byzantine service, support from the local population was a *sine qua non* of any lasting rebellion. Roussel, unlike the previous Norman malcontents, managed to obtain it in the region of the Armeniakon theme, to which he eventually withdrew, and apparently also earlier in Lykaonia and Galatia. The local inhabitants had been left largely unprotected by the central government. They may well have been willing to cooperate with, and offer goods and services to, anyone who could protect them against the Turks' wide-ranging incursions. Roussel is said to have levied tax from the towns in the vicinity of Amaseia, a strategically important and prosperous town on the main east-west road in northern Asia minor. The district had briefly served as Romanus IV's base in autumn, 1071, during his campaigning to regain his throne. The inhabitants are said to have paid up to Roussel out of a mixture of 'fear or good-will'.[116] Their payments are expressly said to have been in 'money' (*chrēmata*) and it appears that part of the proceeds went to the Frankish soldiers, who were stationed in Roussel's 'former castles'. From these

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[112] See above, n. 5.

[113] Schlumberger (*Sigillographie*, 660, 663–4) corrected to *vestes* a reading of the seal's legend which he had earlier taken as *vestiarites*: 'Chefs normands', 296. See above, 297. Roussel's seal belongs to the earlier part of his Byzantine career, since *vestes* was a fairly modest title. Midway through his rebellion, after his capture of Caesar John and proclamation of him as emperor, he declined Michael VII's offer of the very senior title of *curopalates*: Attaleiates, 187.

[114] K. Belke and M. Restle, *Galatien und Lykaonien* (*Tabula Imperii Byzantini* iv), Vienna 1984, 46, 70, 76–7, 88–9.

[115] Attaleiates, 188; Bryennius, 176–7; above, n. 91.

[116] 'phobō ē eunoiā', Bryennius, 187 and *apparatus criticus*. Gautier's proposed insertion of *mallon* after *phobō*, i.e. 'fear *rather than* good-will', is not necessary. Cf. Meineke's edition (as in n. 9 above), 85.

strongpoints, the warriors were able to deter Turks from seriously molesting their localities, while they provided a market for agricultural producers who regularly brought their goods to them.[117]

It seems, then, that Roussel managed to establish a fairly high degree of order within his lordship, yoking together the interests of peasant farmers, townsfolk and his own soldiery, who appear to have been receiving wages in money. The collection and subsequent disbursement of coin could have been undertaken by the local Byzantine officials. At the same time, the fiscal demands made on the population may well have been lighter than those which the Byzantine state had made of them. Roussel's forces were sufficiently numerous to provide garrisons over an area which encompassed the city of Neocaesarea, some one hundred kilometres east of Amaseia. Their total may not have fallen far short of the 2,700 warriors who are said to have comprised Roussel's army at a slightly earlier stage of his insurrection.[118] Even so, their numbers are likely to have been far inferior to those of the rival Byzantine armies which had been raising revenues and requisitioning goods from the Armeniakon theme's inhabitants in the recent past. For the fodder and basic maintenance of his cavalry horses, Roussel could to some extent rely on the properties which must have been attached to his 'former castles'. Thus his costs in fending off the Turks need not have weighed heavily upon the local population and, judging by their reluctance to cooperate with the central government's emissary in bringing him to book, they did not.

The ingenuity of that emissary, Alexius Comnenus, in ensnaring Roussel is celebrated at length by his daughter and son-in-law, respectively Anna Comnena and Nicephorus Bryennius. Their inclination to exaggerate the odds pitted against the hero and to magnify his resourcefulness in adversity is palpable, but the direct and indirect evidence which they yield points consistently to the abiding popularity of Roussel and his fellow-Franks with the local population. The citizens of Amaseia are said to have rioted and some even tried to set Roussel free, after Alexius incarcerated him there. Their cry was that 'they had suffered nothing terrible from him'; and Alexius is said to have been so fearful that 'the powerful' would persist in stirring up the mob to liberate Roussel that he pretended to blind him; then Roussel was presented, blind-folded, to the populace, so as to dash all hopes that he might lead them again.[119] Alexius was also convinced that if the other Franks were left in their fortresses a new 'tyrant' (i.e. usurper of governmental authority) would emerge from among them and regain control of the area. He therefore stayed on himself, blockading individual fortresses and eventually forcing the garrisons to surrender or withdraw. Alexius' precautions strongly imply that the local peasants were disposed to do business with the Franks: his troops had to patrol access-routes to the forts in order to intercept supplies, and

[117] Attaleiates, 199; Bryennius, 184–5; Scylitzes Continuatus, 161. See also Hoffmann, *Rudimente*, 19, 119.

[118] Attaleiates, 189; cf. Bryennius, 179, n.6. Attaleiates' incidental indication (p.199) of the limitations of Roussel's forces in terms of numbers is preferable to Anna's claim that a large, heterogeneous force was confronting her heroic father: *Alexiad*, i, 10, 11.

[119] Bryennius, 190–3; Anna Comnena, i, 15. These two works offer a version of Alexius' feats and schemes which probably owed much to Alexius' telling of them. While Roussel apparently won the sympathies of 'the powerful' of the town and district of Amaseia, Philaretus seems to have alienated the wealthy in Antioch and Edessa: Yarnley, 351–2.

the garrisons' lack of stocks of provisions suggests that they may have taken for granted that a steady stream of essentials would be forthcoming from local producers.[120]

Roussel's had been a well-organised and fairly protracted insurrection, enjoying support from persons of substance – 'the powerful' – in Amaseia;[121] presumably they believed that their property would be secure, and not over-taxed, under Roussel's regime. Even so, Roussel's experiment was unequal to the resources, or rather, the reputation for resources, of the Byzantine state. Alexius Comnenus gained custody of Roussel through promising vast rewards and bribes to a Turkish war-band; Roussel for his part could not convincingly hold out the prospect of similar riches to them. Alexius did not, in fact, have the ready money to hand, and he had to turn to the citizens of Amaseia in order to raise funds with which to reward the Turks for handing over their Frankish captive. Here, too, the reputation of state power was still formidable. Alexius' warning to the populace of the 'wrath of the emperor' in the event of their persistent refusal to cooperate with him and unrest seems to have found its mark.[122] Thus ended 'the greatest rebellion of all',[123] part-intervention in the rivalry for the imperial throne, part-bid opportunistically to create a dominion comparable to the lordships which had recently been imposed in southern Italy.

Finally – and at the price of ignoring Norman involvement in the rebellions and civil wars of the later 1070s – one may glance at the position of Alexius Comnenus.[124] He himself became emperor through a *coup d'état* in 1081. There can be no doubt that he respected the fighting qualities of western warriors, and they played a part in his armies even when the enemy was Robert Guiscard's Normans, in the early 1080s.[125] Alexius is not recorded as having suffered any rising or serious mutiny from the units of westerners under his command; sometimes, in fact, he seems to have been more suspicious of his own, Byzantine-born

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[120] Bryennius, 192–3.

[121] Alexius' tactics against Roussel and his fellows amounted to attrition, and the entire operation must have lasted well over a year. See Bryennius, 183, n. 5; 193, n. 2; 194, n. 1; Polemis, 67–8, 76; Cheynet, *Contestations*, 78 and n. 2.

[122] Bryennius, 190–1; Anna Comnena, i, 14.

[123] Bryennius, 208–09.

[124] Normans certainly participated in the civil wars, serving in the armies of both Nicephorus III Botaneiates and the rebel Nicephorus Bryennius in 1078: Bryennius, 268–71. 'Franks . . . from Italy' were summoned to the Balkans to take part in the revolt of Nicephorus Basilaces soon afterwards: Attaleiates, 297; Scylitzes Continuatus, 182. Occasionally, a Frankish contingent is recorded as having been persuaded by fellow-Franks on the opposing side to join them. Such an act of desertion, and the subsequent rite whereby the deserters placed their right hands between the hands of their new employer, Nicephorus Bryennius, were observed by Alexius Comnenus during a battle in 1078: Bryennius, 274–5; Anna Comnena, i, 24. But there is no reason to suppose that the turning of coats was more prevalent among the Franks than among the Byzantines. One *condottiere* of possible Norman-Italian extraction, Longibardopoulos, was taken prisoner together with several Byzantine generals by the Slav prince of Zeta, Constantine Bodinos, in 1072. He was subsequently married to a sister of Constantine, and put in command of an army consisting mainly of 'Lombards and Serbs'; but he reverted forthwith to the emperor's side: Scylitzes Continuatus, 163, 165; Cheynet, *Contestations*, 79, 389.

[125] Anna Comnena, i, 152; F. Chalandon, *Essai sur le règne d'Alexis I Comnène*, Paris 1900, 76–7, 90–1; Hohlweg, 64.

troops. In 1085, after the collapse of Guiscard's final offensive against him, he is said to have-recruited the majority of Guiscard's men into his own service.[126]

There seem to me to be three main reasons for Alexius' confidence that he could cope with western employees, and for his apparent success. Firstly, once a modicum of order had been restored to the Byzantine polity, the chances that a Frankish rising would be able to hold out for long against the state's resources were slighter than ever. In other words, even Roussel's lordship in northern Asia minor was possible only in the conditions of military paralysis and administrative collapse of the 1070s. Secondly, Alexius had learnt the lessons of the *mode d'emploi* of western mercenaries from personal experience. It is notable that although he allowed some of them their own commander, Constantine Humberto-poulos, this man had been living in Byzantium for some time; he was not a newcomer who had raised his own company in the west. In fact, judging by his Christian name, he had been brought up in an eastern orthodox milieu.[127] Equally, Alexius does not seem to have allowed the 'Franks' to congregate in a particular theme, as they had done in Armeniakon before Roussel's rising. Moreover, their numbers in the 1080s and earlier 1090s seem to have been quite modest, and the unit of five hundred or so cavalrymen despatched by Robert of Flanders seems to have been regarded as of capital significance by Alexius: presumably, they represented a major addition to his existing reserves of western warriors.[128] In contrast, the aggregates of Frankish warriors at Byzantium around the time of the battle of Manzikert were substantial: the 2,700 commanded by Roussel at one stage of his insurrection did not represent the grand total of Frankish veterans still at large on

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[126] Anna Comnena, ii, 60; William of Apulia, 256–7; Orderic, iv, 38–9 and n.1. The entry of one Norman commander, a certain Roger, into Byzantine service at about this time is recorded in his epitaph: Nicholas Callicles, *Carmi*, ed. R. Romano, Naples 1980, 94. Roger's precise origins in 'the Frankish land' – presumably Normandy – remain uncertain: Callicles, 175–6 (commentary); D.M. Nicol, 'Symbiosis and Integration. Some Greco-Latin Families in Byzantium in the Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries', *Byzantinische Forschungen* vii, 1979, 123–4.

[127] Constantine may have been the son of a certain 'Ounpertos', *patrikios, strategos* and Domestic of the regiment of the Noumeroi, whose seal awaits full publication: J. Jouroukova, 'Sceaux de Constantin Humberto', *Actes du XIV Congrès international des Etudes byzantines*, iii, Bucharest 1976, 237; cf. J.-C. Cheynet, 'Du prénom au patronyme: les étrangers à Byzance (X–XII siècles)', *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, ed. N. Oikonomides, Washington, D.C., 1987, 59. But it is very unlikely that 'Ounpertos' *patrikios* is identifiable with the 'Hubertus' who features as the fifth son of Tancred de Hauteville's second marriage in Malaterra, 9 ('Humbertus' in Muratori's ed., *RIS*, v, 550). For the death of 'Humbertus', brother of Robert Guiscard, is recorded in the *Chronicon Breve Northmannicum* s.a. 1071 (*RIS*, v, 278[vi]) without any indication that he died in, or had ever visited, Byzantium. In any case, Constantine Humbertopoulos was, very probably, of mature years by 1081 when, as a senior army commander, he swung his support from Nicephorus III to Alexius Comnenus, thereby greatly enhancing Alexius' chances of seizing the throne. His seals indicate a protracted series of promotions at Alexius' hands: Jouroukova, 235–6. Cf. McQueen, 437.

[128] The five hundred were posted from key point to key point: Alexiad, ii, 109–10, 135; F.L. Ganshof, 'Robert le Frison et Alexis Comnène', *Byzantion* xxxi, 1961, 72–3. At about the same time, another unit of westerners, perhaps numbering two hundred cavalrymen or less, was serving under the command of Taticius: Anna Comnena, ii, 67–8. The abduction of just fifty horses from Bohemond's host in 1108 was treated as a major achievement, and their abductor, William Claret, was rewarded with the senior title of *nobelissimos*: Anna Comnena, iii, 116; Hohlweg, 37, 71. The euphoria perhaps reflects on the limited supply of mounts – and skilled riders – at Byzantium as well as the blow which had been dealt to Bohemond.

imperial soil.[129] And, as witness the recruitment of cavalrymen through the count of Flanders, the provenance of the westerners was more diverse than it had been a generation earlier. These changes were in part forced upon Alexius by the loss of most of Asia minor and by his lack of sufficient money to pay for a large army. But he used such money as he had effectively, and we hear of no disputes specifically to do with pay during his reign.[130]

A third asset of Alexius was his appreciation of the importance of personal bonds and military fellowship to his western soldiers. He had ample opportunity to observe this while a commander of western mercenaries during the 1070s, as well as during operations against Roussel and his companions. Alexius took some westerners into his inner circle of counsellors, and was accessible to many more. He was prepared to socialise with them and his easy familiarity with the leading Crusaders was the despair of his historian-daughter. She recorded that he would even allow them into his private quarters in the palace.[131] But it was through tolerance and accessibility such as this that he gained a reputation for generosity and special indulgence towards warriors, a reputation which found its way, side by side with the celebrated defamatory assessments, into the works of Orderic Vitalis and William of Tyre. To Orderic – or rather, most probably, to one of his sources – Alexius appeared 'affable to warriors and a most generous giver of gifts'.[132] Alexius seems, in particular, to have noted the respect which western knights generally showed for the oath of fealty. I think it quite probable that all western commanders, if not all new recruits from the west, had been required to

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[129] Cheynet, *Contestations*, 398, n. 96.

[130] Conversely, Alexius egged on Bohemond's 'counts' to demand of him their outstanding 'salaries' (*misthous*); he promised that those who entered his own service would receive salaries 'sufficient . . . according to their wishes', Anna Comnena, ii, 32. Alexius' political testament to John II, his son and heir, enjoins him to maintain treasuries full of gold to dispense on any future Crusaders and opines that officials should display graciousness when bestowing gifts and prizes: P. Maas, 'Die Musen des Kaisers Alexios I.', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* xxii, 1913, 357, 358. Cheynet (*Contestations*, 368) suggests that Humbertopoulos' involvement in a plot in 1091 was precipitated by discontent with his rewards. But it could well be that he was by then sufficiently attuned to the ways of the Byzantine ruling élite to engage in their intrigues against the emperor. He was quite rapidly rehabilitated and restored to a senior command: Anna Comnena, ii, 146–7, 193; Cheynet, *Contestations*, 96 and n.3.

[131] Anna Comnena, iii, 162. Stephen of Blois boasted to his wife that Alexius had 'kept me with him most respectfully' for ten days, and he was probably not Alexius' only satisfied Crusading guest in 1097: H. Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100*, Innsbruck 1901, 139. The forementioned Roger (n.126) is made to exclaim in his epitaph: 'Alexius Comnenus, lord of the Ausonians, opened his heart to me, and what beyond? I found a sea of gold, and came to glory': Callicles, ed. Romano, 94.

[132] Orderic, iv, 14–15; cf. ii, 202–03; iv, 16–17, v, 276–7; 278–9 (*positive*); Orderic, v, 42–7; 56–9. 334–9 (*negative*); William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, i, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, Turnhout 1986, 262, 320–2, 436–7 (*sympathetic or positive*); William of Tyre, i, 167, 178–9, 186–90, 193, 211–12, 368–9, 466–7 (*negative*). P.W. Edbury and J.G. Rowe reasonably suggest that William's 'two voices' echo his different sources about the First Crusade: *William of Tyre, Historian of the Latin East*, Cambridge 1988, 134–6. Alexius' bounty evoked mixed reactions at the time of the First Crusade, as Anselm of Ribemont's contemporary letter shows: after receiving priceless gifts at their final audience with him, the Crusading leaders withdrew, 'some with good will and others otherwise': Hagenmeyer, 144–5, 258. But Stephen of Blois was probably not the only leader to have been entranced (Hagenmeyer, 138–9, 219–20), and even those who fared worst at Alexius' hands in 1097 could still subsequently look to him for aid, for example, Raymond of Toulouse (William of Tyre, i, 437, 466).

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take an oath to him personally and to perform homage, from the opening stages of his reign onwards. Thus a bond of honour and mutual fidelity was superimposed on the contract between pay-master and 'wage-receivers' (*misthophoroi*).[133] It was on the strength of his long experience as a largely successful commander of mercenaries that Alexius insisted so stubbornly on the rendering of homage and fealty by all the leading members of the First Crusade. If he was then disappointed, this was because the Crusaders were for the most part pursuing goals which lay, in every sense, beyond him. And his disappointment, although hymned so eloquently by Anna Comnena, was not absolute or such as to induce a change of course. For Alexius continued, during and after the Crusade, to recruit western warriors into his service.[134]

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[133] Alexius is the likeliest eye-witness source of the story of how the Frankish troops under his command deserted to Bryennius and proffered him their right hands in 1078: Bryennius, 274–5; Anna Comnena, i, 24; above, n. 124. Alexius, whether or not an oath had earlier been given to him by the Franks, seems to have judged that it was taken seriously by them, rather than that Frankish mercenaries were incorrigibly fickle or treacherous. Anna mentions 'the oath customary with the Latins' which Robert of Flanders is depicted as swearing at the time of his pledge to send five hundred cavalrymen to Alexius from Flanders: Anna Comnena, ii, 105. Robert's was presumably an oath of very general good faith, since he was not about to perform service in person to Alexius, but the episode suggests that Alexius was already then, in 1089, exacting oaths of *fides* from leading westerners. See J. Shepard, ' "Father" or "Scorpion"? Style and Substance in Alexius' diplomacy', *Colloquium on the Reign of Alexius Comnenus*, ed. M.E. Mullett (forthcoming).
[134] Anna Comnena, iii, 17–18; Orderic, v, 276–7; vi, 102–03; Shepard, ' "Scorpion" ' (forthcoming).

# Part III
# Organization, Tactics and Strategy

# [9]

## THE BYZANTINES IN BATTLE

### GEORGE T. DENNIS

Although the Byzantines were constantly under attack or under threat of attack, they regarded warfare as the least desirable method of defending themselves. Leo VI prefaced his *Tactical Constitutions* with the words: «We must always prefer peace above all else and refrain from war»[1]. Instead of fighting, they chose to employ diplomacy, bribery, covert action, paying tribute, setting one tribe against another. War was the last resort. And when they did decide upon war, they sought to avoid the crush of a pitched battle. For they realized that a frontal assault carried enormous risks. The *Strategikon*, attributed to emperor Maurice (582-602), articulated this concern, «To try simply to overpower the enemy in the open, hand to hand and face to face ... is very risky and can result in serious harm». «A wise commander will not engage the enemy in a pitched battle unless a truly exceptional opportunity or advantage presents itself»[2].

Five hundred years later, Kekaumenos advised the commander to learn all he could about the enemy and, only after thorough investigation, line up for battle. He should weaken the enemy by tricks, machines, ambushes and, last of all, if there is no other way, engage in battle[3]. Leo Phokas reminded his troops that wars are won not so much by pitched battles as by cautious prudence, cunning, and timing, and he forbade any reckless charges in the open field[4].

But, as we know, Byzantine armies did engage in regular battles. Our goal in this paper is to study the manner in which they went about it. But, reconstructing a battle from narrative sources of any period in history is a tricky enterprise, and

1. Leonis Tacticae constitutiones: Libri I-XIV (38), ed. R. Vári, *Leonis imperatoris Tactica*, 2 vols, Budapest 1917-1922; Lib. XVIII, ed. R. Vári, «Bōles Leo Hadi Taktikájának XVIII Fejezete», in G. Pauler-S. Szilágyi, *A Magyar Honfoglalás Kútföi*, Budapest 1900; entire text in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus,* series graeca, Paris 1857 ff, 107, 671-1094 (hereafter *LT*), Prooim. 3, lib. 2, 45.

2. *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. T. Dennis, with transl. by E. Gamillscheg, Vienna 1981 [*Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae* 17]; English transl. G. T. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon. Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy*, Philadelphia 1984 (hereafter *SM*), 7, 1; 8, 86.

3. *Sovjety i Rasskazy Kekavmena*, ed. G. G. Litavrin, Moscow 1972, p. 27.

4. *Leonis diaconi Caloensis historiae libri decem*, ed. C. B. Hase, Bonn 1828 (hereafter *LD*), pp. 2, 3.

medieval sources are notoriously imprecise. Chroniclers seem more interested in
supernatural presences appearing on the battlefield than in what actually transpired
there. Victory or defeat was the result solely of one's piety or of one's sins.
Chroniclers pay scant attention to terrain, armament, and tactics. Still, with
patience and caution, something can be learned from narrative sources. The
military manuals, on the other hand, concentrate on theory and offer the
commander a series of paradigms of battle situations to ponder. Still, more often
than not, they reflect actual operations in the field. I propose, then, to study what
these handbooks teach about the conduct of battle and then to look at the narrative
sources to see how those instructions were implemented[5]. While infantry played a
very important role in warfare, especially in rugged terrain and in night battles, the
sources provide significantly less information about them than about their mounted
colleagues. For this reason, then, and because of the constraints of time, we will
concentrate on cavalry battles, in the ninth through the eleventh centuries[6].

One more preliminary note is called for. We must always bear in mind a
matter often overlooked by scholars: the striking adaptability and flexibility
manifested by the Byzantines in practical matters. The Byzantines did not always
do things the same way. The manuals set rather strict guidelines, but they allowed
the commander a great deal of discretion in the field. Procopius begins his account
of Justinian's wars with praise for the heavily armored, mounted archer, and he
ridicules those who worship more traditional practices and give no credit to modern
improvements[7]. The conservative Kekaumenos counsels the general: «If you find
yourself in a new situation, don't just say, the ancient military writers didn't say
anything about this. You go ahead and figure out a way to deal with it. The ancients
were human and so are you. If they could figure out how to deal with problems that
arise, so can you»[8]. Nikephoros Phokas explicitly allows the commander to vary
the number of units and the arrangement of the formation to adjust to the terrain
or special circumstances[9].

What then do the military manuals say about battle? We can confidently begin
with the *Strategikon* of Maurice, which, although dealing with an earlier period,

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5. For an earlier period see C. M. Mazzucchi, «Le Katagraphiae dello *Strategikon* di Maurizio e
lo schieramento di battaglia dell'esercito romano nel vi/vii secolo», *Aevum* 55 (1981), pp. 111-138.

6. On the infantry, particularly in the tenth century, see Eric McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth:
Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*, Washington 1995, pp. 202-210; 257-279.

7. *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, ed. J. Haury, add. et corr. G. Wirth, I, Leipzig 1963, *De
bellis libri I-IV*, 1, 1.

8. Kekavmena, p. 142.

9. The *Praecepta Militaria* of Nikephoros Phokas, ed. and transl. E. McGeer in *Sowing the
Dragon's Teeth*, 12-59 (hereafter *PM*), p. 30.

gives expression to enduring Byzantine military theory and practice and was copied and paraphrased many times. The *Tactical Constitutions* of Leo VI (886-912) repeat, rephrase, and adapt the *Strategikon* to conditions in the late ninth century. The anonymous *Sylloge Tacticorum* reflects conditions later in the tenth century, as do the *De re militari* and the treatises of Nikephoros Phokas, the *Praecepta Militaria* and the *De Velitatione*[10].

Before the battle the commanders were given a checklist of things to do. The men had to be selected for service, assigned to units, dekarchies, or kontoubernia, which were then made part of banda or tagmata, and so into larger units, droungoi and tourmai[11]. The names of the units as well as their numbers varied over the centuries: Leo's *Taktika* has ten for a dekarchy and between two and four hundred for a tagma. The droungos should comprise not more than 3.000, and the tourma not more than 6.000[12]. Experienced officers were assigned to the various units. The manuals also provide detailed instruction about armament and weapons[13], as well as training and drills[14]. The day before battle, or on the day itself, the standards were to be blessed and religious services held[15].

Before setting out on his campaign against Persia, Herakleios spent a good deal of time in training his troops, including having them take part in very realistic mock battles[16]. Nikephoros Phokas put his men through rigorous training on arriving on Crete[17]. Basil II was noted for his insistence on drilling his troops, his attention to detail, and his personal involvement in the selection and evaluation of each officer. When they complained about too much drilling and not enough fighting, he smiled and replied that if he did not keep them at it, their battles would never end[18].

10. *Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim Inedita Leonis Tactica dicebatur*, ed. A. Dain, Paris 1938; *De re militari*, ed. and transl. G. T. Dennis under the title «Campaign Organization and Tactics», *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, Washington 1985 [*Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae* 25], pp. 241-335; *De velitatione*, ed. and transl. G. T. Dennis under the title «Skirmishing», *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, pp. 137-239 (hereafter *DV*), and by G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris 1986, pp. 29-135. On the various military treatises, see A. Dain, «Les stratégistes byzantins», *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), pp. 317-392.

11. *SM* 7, *LT* 4, 1-3.

12. *LT* 4, 40-47; 13.

13. E. g., *LT* 5-6.

14. *SM* 3 and 6; *LT* 7, *et alibi*.

15. *SM* 7, 1; *LT* 13, 1. See also G. T. Dennis, «Religious Services in the Byzantine army», *EYΛO-ΓIMA. Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, S. J.* [= Studia Anselmiana 110], Rome 1993, pp. 107-117.

16. *Theophanis Chronographia* 1, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1883, pp. 303-304.

17. *LD* 3, 1.

18. Psellos, Chronographia: *Michele Psello, Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia)*, ed. S. Impellizzeri, transl. S. Ronchey, 2 vols., Milan 1984, 1, 32-34; also ed. E. Ranauld, 2 vols., Paris ²1967.

Armament and weapons are described in detail in the manuals. Lances and swords are mentioned in almost all the accounts. Most also mention heavy iron maces; the battle scenes illustrated in the Madrid Skylitzes depict the soldiers wielding maces as much as other weapons[19]. In 971 Theodore Lalakon killed many of the enemy with an iron mace[20]. Well into the twelfth century we read of a great fear of Byzantine maces[21].

The manuals insist that the army gather adequate supplies of food and water before combat[22]. Romanos Argyros, in 1030, did not listen to his experienced military staff who advised him not to undertake an expedition in Syria in the summer because water would be scarce and the fully armored soldiers would find the heat intolerable. But he ignored them and marched right into disaster[23]. Provision was also made for bringing up water during battle[24]. At Dorostolon, 21 July 971, when the fighting was at its most intense, the Byzantine troops, in full armor, were suffering from the heat and thirst and were beginning to weaken. John Tzimiskes ordered flasks of wine and water to be brought to them; they revived and managed to hold their own on the battlefield[25].

In addition, Kekaumenos insisted that the troops must be rested before any attack; the Bulgarians under Alousianos did not rest before attacking Thessalonica and were defeated[26]. A Byzantine expedition against the Pechenegs did not stop for rest and met the same fate[27].

On the day before battle, the general was to gather intelligence about the enemy from spies, scouts, deserters, and prisoners[28]. He was to make sure that the horses were watered, and that the men had a substantial meal, especially in the

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19. See A. Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Scylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid*, Venice 1979; S. Cirac Estopañan, *Skylitzes Matritensis*, Barcelona 1965; A. B. Hoffmeyer, «Military Equipment in the Byzantine Manuscript of Scylitzes in Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid», *Gladius* 5 (Madrid 1966).

20. *LD* 9, 41.

21. In an enkomion on Manuel I Komnenos, Eustathios of Thessalonica remarks that the Hungarians fled in terror at the sight of Byzantine soldiers wielding maces: oration 35, 11-36, 14, ed. W. Regel, *Fontes rerum byzantinarum*, 1, St. Petersburg-Leipzig 1892, pp. 173-184.

22. *LT* 13; PM 2, 11-14.

23. *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn, Berlin 1973, pp. 379-380.

24. PM 1, 146-48; DV 7-10.

25. Skylitzes, p. 306. See S. McGrath, «The Battles of Dorostolon (971); Rhetoric and Reality», *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S. J.*, ed. T. Miller and J. Nesbitt, Washington 1995, pp. 152-164.

26. Kekavmena, p. 160.

27. Kekavmena, p. 162.

28. *LT* 13; *PM* 4, 192-212.

morning. The customary announcements were to be made, in particular, those warning the men against stopping to loot before the final outcome of the battle.

Knowledge of the terrain was essential[29]. The *Strategikon* cites an earlier, unknown source: «We should choose the terrain not only to suit our armament, but also with a view to the various peoples. Parthians and Gauls handle themselves well on the plains. The Spanish and Ligurians fight better in the mountains and the hills, and the Britons in the woods, while the Germans are more at home in the swamps»[30]. Contemporary enemies are discussed in Book XI, and the commander is taught to «select open, smooth and level terrain» when fighting against the Persians and the Scythians, but rugged and difficult ground if he has to fight «the light-haired people»[31]. In Book XVIII of his *Taktika*, Leo treats of terrain in fighting the enemy of his day, and, by the very nature of things, great emphasis is placed on terrain throughout the *De Velitatione.*

The Byzantines, campaigning against the Paulicians, arrayed themselves on higher ground than the enemy, and they used this position to great advantage by giving the impression of a huge multitude on the hilltops, so that the Paulicians were frightened and fled[32]. At Dorostolon Tzimiskes observed that the battlefield was narrow, giving the Rhos an advantage. He ordered his men to retreat to the broader plain and then turn and hold their ground[33].

The commander had to take all these factors into account and then draw up his plans for battle. Attaliates pictures emperor Romanos Diogenes in his tent sketching out battle plans before engaging the enemy[34]. Once it had been decided to take the field, and all the preparations had been completed, it was time to line up the army for battle. All the manuals stress what they believed and wanted to be most characteristic of the Roman armies, $εὐταξία$, good order, discipline[35].

The formation for battle recommended in the *Strategikon* is essentially the same as that prescribed by Leo VI (Book XII) and by the other manuals. Allowance is made for variations because of the terrain or special circumstances, but the prescribed battle formation consists of certain standard elements. The first line ($πρόμαχος$) was to be composed of three equal units, left, center, right, with the

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29. *LT* 14, 4-6.

30. *SM* 8, 2, 88.

31. *SM* 11, 1, 54-57; 2, 95-101; 3, 42-44.

32. Skylitzes, p. 139.

33. Skylitzes, p. 307.

34. *Michaelis Attaliotae historia*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1853, p. 113, 8.

35. E. g., *LT* 12, 1. Basil II is quoted as saying that the policy of never breaking up their formation contributed mightily toward victory, and it was his opinion that this alone made the Roman phalanxes unbeatable: Psellos, *Chronographia*, 1, 33.

lieutenant general taking his position in the middle. Deputatoi, medical corpsmen, were stationed behind them.

Then, and this is something the manuals strongly insist on, about a bowshot to the rear there should be a second or support line (βοηθός), comprised of about one third of the entire army. This line was to be divided into four units with spaces between them, i. e. three spaces. In the middle space the commanding general should take his place with his staff, along with the standard bearers and trumpeters. From there he could more easily survey the whole battlefield and, at the same time, not become directly involved in the fighting. In the spaces between the four units, one or two tagmata should position themselves thinly, so that they could quickly step aside and allow the troops of the front line to find refuge in case they had been defeated and were being pursued by the enemy. The tired enemy would then face a fresh support line. This line would also serve to deter men from the first ranks from deserting, always a distinct possibility.

Behind the second line were the baggage train and the reserve horses, and behind them the rear guard. Units assigned to set up ambushes would be stationed off to the flanks or to the rear. Off to the right were the outflankers who were to circle around the left flank of the enemy and to the left were the flank guards who were to keep the enemy from doing the same to them. If the army was smaller, the support line might be reduced to only two tagmata, if larger, a third support line might be organized. Leo's *Taktika* (Book XVIII) strongly recommends this to defend against the Arabs.

In the second half of the ninth century, the *Sylloge Tacticorum* and the *Praecepta Militaria* of Nikephoros Phokas prescribed some significant variations in forming the battle line. The first line was to be composed of three units, but the center, made up of kataphraktoi, was shaped like a blunt wedge, called a triangle by Nikephoros, and it projected ahead of the other two divisions, so that its rear rank was equal to the first rank of the right and the left. Phokas describes the kataphraktoi formation in some detail, for it was central to his tactics[36]. It was to be twelve rows deep with each row adding two men to each side as the formation went back, increasing each row by four men. The first model he presents is one of 504 men with twenty in the first row and sixty-four in the last. Smaller formations were also envisioned, but the numbers were not as important as the pattern. The first four rows carried iron maces and charged into the enemy; the archers were in the middle. Men with lances, swords, and maces were positioned on the sides.

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36. See McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth,* pp. 286-289.

## FORMATION OF THE FIRST BATTLE LINE

| flank guards, 1–3 banda | meros of Vexillations | meros of federati | meros of Illyrikiani | outflankers, 1–2 banda |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ʏKK | ✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣ ᴣᴣᴣꭓᴣᴣ ᴣ ᴣᴣ✝ʌ✝ | ✝ʌ✝ ᴣᴣ ᴣᴣᴣ•ᴣᴣᴣ ᴣᴣ✝ʌ✝ | ✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣ ᴣᴣᴣꭓᴣᴣ ᴣᴣ ᴣ✝ʌ✝ | KK |
| KKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKK KKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| KKꭓ | ꭓKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKK ꭓKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| KKꭏ | KKKKKKKKKKꭓKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKK ꭓKꭓKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| KKK | KKKKKKKKKKꭓKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKK KKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| KKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKꭓ | KKKKKKKKKK KKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| KKK | KKKKKKKKꭓKKKKKKK | KKKKKKKKꭓ KKKKKK | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | KK |
| ᴣ | ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ | ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | ᴣ |
| | | | ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ | |

## SECOND, OR SUPPORT LINE

| meros | tagma | meros | tagma | meros | tagma | meros |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣᴣꭓ ᴣ ᴣ✝ʌ✝ | KKKKKKKK✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣ ᴣ ᴣ ᴣ✝ʌ✝ | KKK ♣KKKK✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣᴣꭓ ᴣ ᴣ✝ʌ✝ | KKKKKKK✝ʌ✝ᴣᴣᴣꭓ ᴣ ᴣ✝ʌ✝ | | | |
| KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKꭓ | | KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK | | | | |
| KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK |
| KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKꭓKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK |
| KKKKKKKKKK | | ꭓKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK |
| KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK |
| KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK | | KKKKKKKKKK |

| rearguard | baggage train | reserve horses, 1 | rearguard |
|---|---|---|---|
| KᴣK | Ⴖ TTTTTT | ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ | KᴣK |
| KKK | TTTTTT | ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ | KKK |
| KKK | TTTTTT | ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ | KKK |
| KKK | TTTTTT | ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ | KKK |
| KKK | TTTTTT | | KKK |

reserve horses, 2

ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ
ʌʌʌʌʌʌʌ
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Cavalry Battle Line according to the Strategikon of Maurice
From *Maurice's Strategikon*, Translated by George Dennis, Philadelphia,
University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984

The second, or support line was made up of four cavalry units with the general in the middle, to which was added a third line of three units, called by the Arabic term, *saka*, and behind them were the units guarding the baggage train[37].

Michael Rhangabe set up his battle line in good order before charging against the enemy[38]. In summer 917 Leo Phokas, Domestic of the Schools, assembled all the thematic and tagmatic troops in the plain of Diabasis, near the fortress of Acheloos, had them line up in formation and then advance against the Bulgarians[39]. In 977 Bardas Phokas is recorded to have divided his forces into three units[40]. He once more lined up his troops in order near Abydos, in 989, when he saw Basil II arranging his troops in formation[41]. When Nikephoros Phokas landed in Crete, he lined up his army in three divisions and had them advance behind the standard of the cross[42]. Before Tarsus, Nikephoros Phokas lined up his troops, with the kataphraktoi in the center and the archers and slingers firing from behind, while he led the cavalry on the right and Tzimiskes that on the left[43]. In 1070 Romanos Diogenes drew up his troops in two battle lines[44]. This is about the only mention in the narrative sources of the two lines required by the manuals.

Before sending them into battle, the commander was supposed to exhort his troops, and there are several accounts of such exhortations[45].

In front of the main line were stationed skirmishers, called prokoursatores by Nikephoros, composed of light cavalry, lancers and archers, whose assignment was to harass and shake up the enemy line and provoke them into breaking up their formation.

In campaigning against the Bulgarians, Michael Rhangabe concentrated first on skirmishing, mostly with archery, to the advantage of the Byzantines[46]. Leo Phokas employed skirmishing and ambushes against the Saracens with great success[47]. In 970 the Byzantine forces made great use of ambushes also against the Rhos[48]. The same year, they lined up for battle against the Pechenegs, and after a series of individual combats won by the Byzantines, the Pechenegs broke ranks and

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37. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-284.
38. Skylitzes, p. 6.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-322.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 337; cf. Psellos, *Chronographia*, 1, 33.
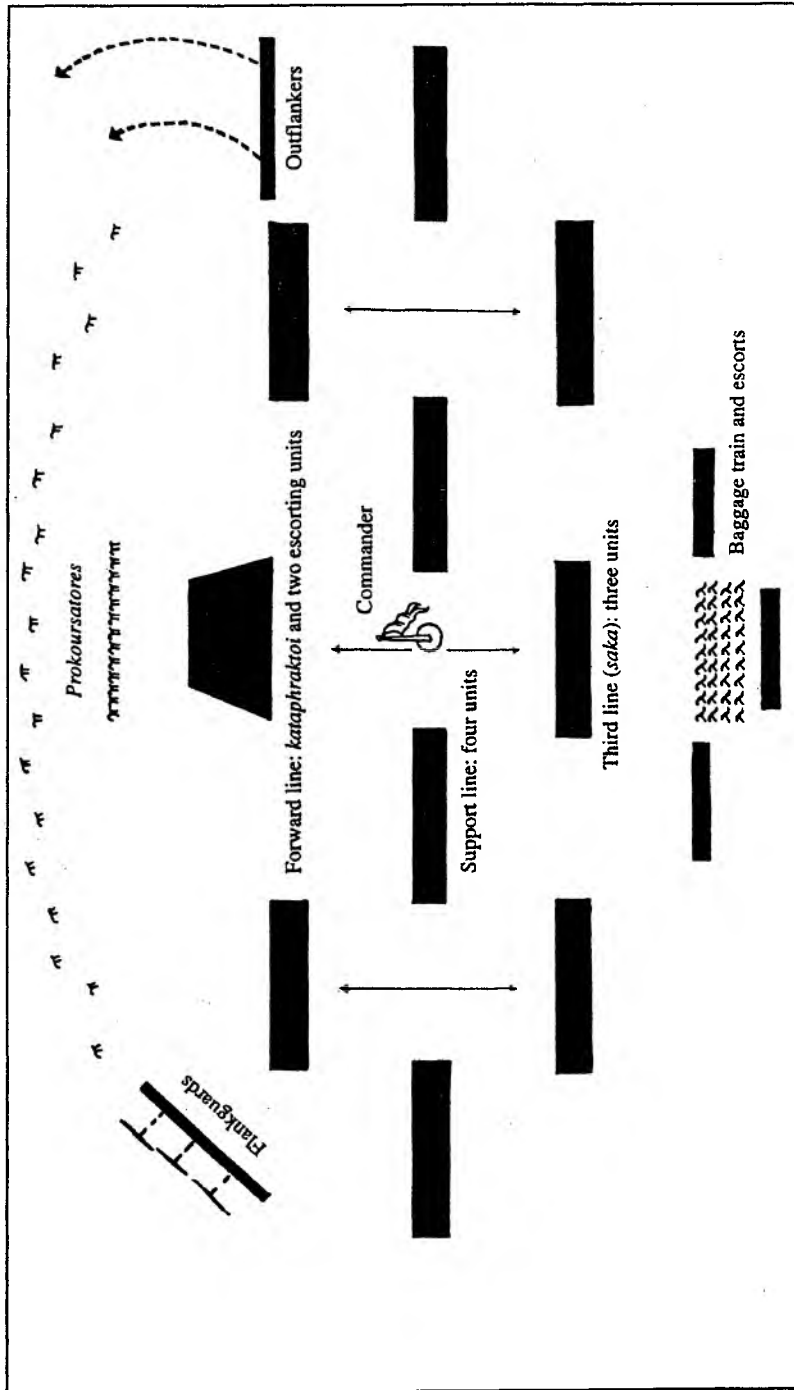42. *LD* 1, 5.
43. *LD* 4, 3.
44. Attaleiates, p.111.
45. *SM* 7, 4; Skylitzes, p. 6; 337.
46. Skylitzes, p. 6.
47. *LD* 2, 3; 2, 61.
48. Skylitzes, p. 289.

Cavalry Battle Line according to the Praecepta of Nikephoros Phokas
From Eric McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century,*
Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, 1994

fled[49]. In 976 Bardas Phokas pretended he was treating his soldiers to a festive dinner, leading the enemy to believe that there would be no battle on that day. So they too relaxed and enjoyed a good meal. While they were doing so, Bardas had the trumpets sounded and his men surrounded and attacked them[50]. Basil II was noted for putting off a frontal attack, preferring instead to harass the enemy with stratagems and assigning light armed troops to fire at them from a distance[51]. With great pride Anna Komnene records the successful use her father Alexios made of stratagems and ambushes[52].

Military authors forbid the commander to take part in the fighting himself, for if he should fall, the whole army would lose courage[53]. Such dependence on the leader, based on a personal bond between him and his men, was the weak point of all medieval armies, east and west. The Byzantines, as well as their enemies, became demoralized when their leader fell or was rumored to have fallen. During a battle near Acheloos, on 6 August 917, the domestic got off his horse to get some water, the horse broke loose and ran through the army riderless. The men thought the domestic must have been killed and they panicked. They ceased their pursuit of the Bulgarians and turned to flight and found themselves pursued, with disastrous results[54]. At Apamea, in 998, the Byzantines had won the battle and were pursuing the Arabs when their leader, Damianos Dalassenos, was killed. They suddenly became demoralized and were routed by the Arabs, who had rallied at the news[55]. In 1071 the emperor wanted to get the troops who were pursuing the enemy back to camp before dark. He had the imperial banner turned around as the signal for this. But when the soldiers who had ridden ahead of the main body saw this, they thought the emperor had fallen in defeat and they raced back in disorder[56]. It was precisely because of this dependence on the leader that Nikephoros Phokas ordered that the charge of the heavy cavalry should be aimed directly at the enemy commander[57]. Individuals also took it upon themselves to attack the enemy leader, as Anemas attacked the Russian prince Svjatoslav, in 971, although he himself was killed in the attempt[58].

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49. *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

51. Psellos, *Chronographia*, 1, 33.

52. Anne Comnène, *Alexiade*, ed. B. Leib, 3 vols., Paris 1937-1945, 1, 1-3.

53. E. g., *SM* 2, 16.

54. Skylitzes, p. 203-204.

55. M. Canard, «Les sources arabes de l'histoire byzantine aux confins des Xe et XIe siècles», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 19 (1961), pp. 284-314, esp. 299-300.

56. Attaleiates, pp. 161.

57. *PM* 59.

58. *LD* 9, 13.

At times, though, the commander did enter into the thick of combat. In 921, the commander of the forces in Adrianople, the patrician Leon, was noted for his sudden, swift charges against the Bulgarians and came to be known as Moroleon, stupid Leon[59]. In 971 the emperor John Tzimiskes doffed the imperial insignia, grabbed a spear, spurred his horse on, and personally led his men into close combat[60]. Anna Komnene portrays her father, Alexios, taking a leading part in the fighting[61].

The manuals give detailed instructions on the preparations for battle and on what must be done after the battle. But they do not tell us a great deal about the actual conduct of a battle. Once the battle had been joined, it seems, there was little the commander, or anyone else, could do to control events. Each soldier was on his own and fought as best he could[62].

After the light cavalry had completed their work of harassing and destabilizing the enemy line, the moment came for the main body to charge against the enemy. In almost all the accounts a trumpet sounds the call to battle. The advance began with a prayer as they left the camp and got their formation in order. The herald shouted out the orders for the advance, which, while first recorded in the *Strategikon*, retained their importance in subsequent centuries. «Silence. Do not fall back. Do not go ahead of the standard. Advance even with the front rank. Keep your eyes on the standard ... Soldier, stay in formation. ... Do not charge out and break ranks»[63].

It was of the utmost importance that the troops remain in formation until the moment of contact with the enemy. Basil II issued strict orders that no soldier should advance in front of the battle line; if anyone did so, and even if he successfully fought against the enemy, he was to be severely punished[64]. One may also recall the story of the sixteen year old Manuel Komnenos who courageously charged out against the enemy, but later in the imperial pavilion was flogged with willow twigs by the emperor, his father, for being so rash and was forbidden to engage the enemy in close combat[65].

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59. Skylitzes, p. 218.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300; *LD* 9, 14.

61. Alexiade, 1, 5-6.

62. The comment of R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193*, Cambridge 1956, pp. 12-13, is pertinent here: «Once [the medieval commander] had launched [his troops] into the battle, he had little or no control over them, and this limitation applied especially to the most effective troops, the mailed mounted knights. ...The result of the battle must then be left to the interplay of morale, individual prowess, and good fortune».

63. *SM* 3, 5.

64. Psellos, *Chronographia*, 1, 33.

65. *Niketas Choniates Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, Berlin 1975 [*Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*], p. 35.

The horsemen were to advance with a precise measured gait, a trot and, above all, to stay in formation. At first they rode in extended order, about a meter apart, then when they were about a mile away from the enemy they closed ranks. The advance of the cavalry, especially of the kataphraktoi, was designed to completely unnerve the enemy – and it often seems to have done just that. They trotted forward deliberately, in tight formation, and in total silence. Their goal was to hit the target en masse, not as isolated individuals, like western knights. At about a bowshot from the enemy, the archers in the middle of the formation opened fire. The command to charge was given. The dekarchs and pentarchs leaned forward, covered the heads and part of the horses' necks with their shields, held their lances «high as their shoulders as the fair-haired races do», or raised their maces or swords to strike. All the while they maintained their close order trotting along in an eerie, unnatural silence.

At Dorostolon, we are told that the Byzantine troops advanced with experience and technical skill[66]. Before Tarsus, the trumpets sounded and the Byzantines moved forward with incredible precision, and the entire plain sparkled with the gleam of their armor. The Tarsiots could not withstand so great an assault. Overwhelmed by the impact of the lances and by the missiles shot by the men behind them, they at once gave way to flight. A terrible fear overwhelmed them as they beheld so great a mass methodically advancing[67]. In 1070, the Byzantine troops are mentioned as marching out in companies in good order; the emperor ordered the trumpeter to sound the charge, and the men advanced slowly in good order[68]. The same year, the Turks fled when they saw the Roman phalanxes all drawn up in ordered, disciplined battle array[69].

But at times silence was not properly observed. Near Preslav John Tzimiskes ordered the trumpets to sound the call to battle, the cymbals to clash, and drums to roll, so that an incredible din burst forth as the mountains echoed the drums, the armor clashed, horses whinnied, and men shouted[70]. Nikephoros Phokas ordered the drums to roll for a night attack[71]. In charging out to ambush the Rhos, Bardas Phokas ordered the drums to beat continuously[72].

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66. Skylitzes, p. 304.
67. *LD* 4, 31.
68. Attaleiates, p. 114; 126.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
70. *LD* 8, 4.
71. *LD* 1, 11.
72. *LD* 6, 13.

The moment of impact must have been terrible indeed. Nikephoros Ouranos pictures it for us. «The kataphraktoi will smash in the heads and bodies of the enemy and their horses with their iron maces and sabers; they will break into and dismember their formations and break through and so completely destroy them»[73].

At Dorostolon the battle went back and forth, until Tzimiskes ordered the Immortals to attack the left wing of the Rhos. They couched their spears, spurred on their horses, and charged and forced the Rhos to flee[74]. The Rhos could not stand up to the Byzantine lances in a cavalry charge[75]. His officers told prince Svjatoslav that their men could not stand up against the ironclad horsemen in combat[76]. In 1070, the front ranks shouted the war cry and charged with their shields held before them[77].

The final phase of battle was the pursuit, about which the manuals, especially the *Praecepta* of Phokas, have much to say. They warn about the feigned flight of the enemy, their sudden turning back, their traps and ambushes. The Byzantines were to make sure that the enemy was in full flight and that there were no other hostile forces in the vicinity. Concern was constantly expressed about the soldiers stopping for booty and prisoners. All the authors view this very seriously and assign severe penalties for violators, but it was difficult to enforce. Their leaders, moreover, held out the promise of booty as an incentive to valor. The pursuit was meant to destroy the foe utterly so he would not fight again.

In a fierce battle in Thrace, the Bulgarians defeated and pursued the Byzantines. The emperor was standing with his bodyguard on higher ground and saw that the Bulgarians were very disorganized. He ordered the troops with him to attack, and they caught the Bulgarians off guard and killed and captured many[78]. The sources give many other examples of the Byzantines pursuing a defeated foe or, just as often, of their being pursued.

In all discussions of warfare and of battle, two factors must be kept in mind. First, the unexpected. Despite the best organization, the best leadership, and the best laid plans, something could always go wrong: they could always meet up with δευτέρα τύχη. A change in the weather, miscalculations, failure of supplies to arrive, drought or disease, mutiny or desertion. Commanders were counseled to prepare for any eventuality but, of course, they simply could not do so, no more

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73. «The *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, Chapters 56 though 65», ed. and transl. by E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 79-163, c. 61, 204-214.

74. Skylitzes, p. 304; *LD* 8, 6.

75. *LD* 8, 6.

76. *LD* 9, 7.

77. Attaleiates, p. 114.

78. Skylitzes, p. 13.

than military commanders of any age. The second, which no textbook could teach, was the personal inspiration given by outstanding leaders, such as Constantine V, Phokas, Tzimiskes, Basil II, and others.

After the battle the army was to give thanks to God and to his saints for their victory. Tzimiskes, for example, after defeating the Rhos, in April 971, offered prayers of thanksgiving to St. George, whose feast day is was and, on his triumphal entry into the capital, gave the place of honor to an icon of Mary[79]. The men were to be rewarded, or punished, for their actions during the fighting. After his victory in 971 Tzimiskes rewarded his troops with gifts and drink[80]. Finally, they were to bury the dead[81].

We can, I think, conclude with two very general observations. I stress the word, general, because exceptions will leap to everyone's mind. The first such observation is that the Byzantines fought their wars, especially their battles, in accord with the instructions laid down in the military manuals. The second observation, making due allowance for all sorts of unexpected and extraneous circumstances, is that when they followed the rules in the manuals, they usually won their battles.

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79. Skylitzes, p. 300; 310.
80. *LD* 9, 4.
81. *SM* 7, B, 6; *LT* 14, 35.

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## THE CONTRIBUTION OF ARCHERY TO THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF ANATOLIA

### By WALTER EMIL KAEGI, JR

ONE of the most important tasks for Byzantine historians is the explanation of the Byzantine loss of Anatolia to the Seljuk Turks in the second half of the eleventh century. In 1050 the peninsula seemed to be the firm keystone of the Byzantine Empire; the Byzantines had been defending it successfully against the Arabs since the seventh century. By the accession of Alexius Comnenus to the emperorship in 1081 the Seljuks had overrun most of Anatolia. The apparent ease and rapidity of this Seljuk victory has surprised scholars and stimulated considerable research. Many internal political, economic, and social factors have been found responsible for the collapse of Byzantine military resistance: factional quarrels of the Byzantine civil bureaucracy and military leadership, civil wars for the imperial throne, excessive reliance upon costly and disloyal foreign mercenary troops, gradual absorption of the vital native peasant-soldier land holdings by the landed aristocracy, and official intolerance and active persecution of non-orthodox (especially Armenian) subjects.[1]

An additional factor of considerable importance has not been investigated: the decisive advantage often given to the Turks by their skillful use of the bow and arrow. The Seljuks preferred the bow to other weapons; Byzantine sources attribute numerous Turkish victories to the the dexterity of the Seljuks with the bow.[2]

Numerous difficulties confront the historian endeavoring to study any aspect of Byzantine-Seljuk warfare. No official Byzantine battle reports are extant. Most Byzantine and Armenian historians were relatively uninformed about the military situation on the distant eastern and southern frontiers; often they were simply not interested in military affairs. Most of them did not personally observe the warfare between Byzantine and Turk, let alone participate in it. Their descriptions of the fighting are frequently vague. Astonished by the sudden collapse of the Empire's defenses, these historians sought to find a contemporary scapegoat.

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[1] On the general problem of eleventh-century Byzantine decline, see: Speros Vryonis, "Byzantium: the Social Basis of Decline," *Greek-Roman-and Byzantine Studies*, II (1959), 157–175; Peter Charanis, "The Byzantine Empire in the Eleventh Century," *A History of the Crusades*, I, ed. K. M. Setton and M. A. Baldwin (Philadelphia, 1956), 177–219; R. J. H. Jenkins, *The Byzantine Empire on the Eve of the Crusades*, Pamphlet G-24 in the General Series of the Historical Association (London, 1953); Claude Cahen, "La Première pénétration turque en Asie Mineure," *Byzantion*, XVIII (1948), 5–67; Paul Wittek, "Deux chapitres de l'histoire des Turcs de Roum," *Byzantion*, XI (1936), 285–319; J. Laurent, *Byzance et les Turcs seljoucides dans l'Asie occidentale jusqu'en 1081* (Nancy, 1913); and Carl Neumann, *Die Weltstellung des byzantinischen Reiches vor den Kreuzzügen* (Leipzig, 1894). For a more extensive bibliography on the Seljuks, see Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, 2nd. ed. (Berlin, 1958), 318–319.

[2] The importance of the bow and arrow in the Seljuk army is discussed by A. K. S. Lambton, "Contributions to the Study of Seljūq Institutions" (unpublished 1939 dissertation at the University of London), pp. 138–139. A satisfactory general discussion of Seljuk military tactics from Latin sources is found in R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193* (Cambridge, England, 1956), pp. 80–82.

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Some of these writers, for example, dedicated their works to contemporary emperors; such authors naturally blamed military defeats upon the predecessors of the present rulers.[3] Armenian writers, filled with religious and national animosity toward the orthodox Byzantines, ascribed the loss of Anatolia to the personal baseness, avarice, impiety, and bigotry of certain emperors.[4] These Byzantine and Armenian historians, however, usually included information indicating that other factors also contributed to the Turkish conquest.

The principal Byzantine sources for this essay are: the *History of the Wars* composed by the sixth-century historian, Procopius of Caesarea;[5] the history composed in the tenth century by Joseph Genesius;[6] an anonymous tenth-century continuation of the chronicle of the monk, Theophanes;[7] the manual of military tactics written by the Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912);[8] the history of Michael Attaliates, an important eleventh-century Byzantine official;[9] the history written by the Caesar Nicephorus Bryennius during the first quarter of the twelfth century.[10] The most useful Armenian sources include *The History of Armenia* composed by Aristakis of Lastiverd after 1071,[11] and, more important, the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa, who recorded events up to 1136.[12]

The most valuable of these works for this essay is definitely the history of Michael Attaliates. This historian was an influential military judge during the critical reigns of Emperors Romanus IV Diogenes (1067–1071) and Michael VII (1071–1078) when the Seljuks successfully occupied virtually all of Anatolia. Attaliates participated in campaigns against the Seljuks in Asia, advised Emperor Romanus; in Europe he served in the wars against the Pecheneg raiders. In recording his narrative he had the benefit of personal observation and experience in the field and access to the most authoritative written and unwritten official sources. He wrote his account during the years 1079 and 1080 while the events were still fresh in his memory. The result is a narrative containing details of mili-

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[3] See the introductory remarks of Michael Attaliates to his *Historia*, I. Bekker ed. (Bonn, 1853), pp. 3–4. Also note the preface of Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, A. Meineke, ed. (Bonn, 1836), pp. 6–16.

[4] Matthieu d'Edesse, *Chronique*, E. Dulaurier trans. (Paris, 1858), p. 113.

[5] *Procopius with an English Translation*, H. B. Dewing ed. and trans., Loeb Classical Library, 7 vols. (London, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1913–1940). For a detailed study and recent bibliography on Procopius, see the article by Berthold Rubin, "Prokopios von Kaisareia," *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft,* xxiii, Part 1 (Stuttgart, 1957), cols. 273–599.

[6] Joseph Genesius, *Regna*, C. Lachmann ed. (Bonn, 1834). For information on Genesius, see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, i, *ed. cit.*, 318–319.

[7] *Historia*, I. Bekker ed. (Bonn, 1838). See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, i, 540–544. For the relationship of this chronicle with the history of Genesius, see the important article by F. Barišić, "Génésios et le continuateur de Théophane," *Byzantion*, xxviii (1958), 119–133.

[8] Leo, *Tactica*, R. Vari ed., 2 vols. (Budapest, 1917). See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, i, 400–409.

[9] Michael Attaliates, *Historia*, I. Bekker ed. (Bonn, 1853). See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, i, 427–428. A new edition and translation is being prepared by Henri Grégoire.

[10] Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, A. Meineke ed. (Bonn, 1836). See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, i, 443–444.

[11] Aristakis of Lastiverd, *Histoire d'Arménie*, E. Prud'homme trans. (Paris, 1858).

[12] Matthieu d'Edesse, *Chronique*, E. Dulaurier trans. (Paris, 1858).

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tary clashes that other Byzantine historians mention, if at all, in very general terms.[13] On the other hand, his criticisms of certain Byzantine emperors were probably exaggerated, since his avowed purpose in writing this history was to glorify the achievements of the contemporary emperor, Nicephorus III Botaniates.[14]

## II

The mounted archer played a critical role in early Byzantine history. The skillful use of the bow and arrow by Justinian's cavalry was one of the most decisive factors contributing to the great Byzantine victories in the West during the sixth century. The historian Procopius related that no less authoritative an expert than the commander Belisarius attributed his successes over the Ostrogoths in Italy to his employment of mounted archers:

> . . . in engaging with them [the Ostrogoths] at the first with only a few men he had noticed just what the difference was between the two armies, so that if he should fight his battles with them with a force which was in strength proportionate to theirs, the multitudes of the enemy could inflict no injury upon the Romans by reason of the smallness of their numbers. And the difference was this, that practically all the Romans and their allies, the Huns, are good mounted bowmen, but not a man among the Goths has had practice in this branch, for their horsemen are accustomed to use only spears and swords, while their bowmen enter battle on foot and under cover of the heavy-armed men. So the horsemen, unless the engagement is at close quarters, have no means of defending themselves against opponents who use the bow, and therefore can easily be reached by the arrows and destroyed; and as for the footsoldiers, they can never be strong enough to make sallies against men on horseback.[15]

Procopius from his own considerable combat experience believed that the appearance of the mounted archer in the Byzantine army constituted a very significant and radical innovation in warfare. He admired the horse archers and declared that they were not at all inferior to the warriors of antiquity: "they are expert horsemen, and are able without difficulty to direct their bows to either side while riding at full speed, and to shoot an opponent whether in pursuit or in flight."[16]

Contemporary writers attribute two very important Italian victories by Justinian's army to the skillful employment of mounted archers. Justinian's general, Narses, virtually annihilated the Ostrogothic army under King Totila at Busta Gallorum in northern Italy during the year 552. The Byzantine mounted archers shot down from a distance the Ostrogothic horsemen, who were armed only with spears; the Ostrogothic cavalry were destroyed before they could make contact.[17] Two years later, in 554, Narses wiped out an invading horde of Alamanni under their chieftain, Butilinus. Again Byzantine mounted archers were responsible for

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[13] See the comments of Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches (527–1453)*, 2nd. ed. (Munich, 1897), pp. 269–271.

[14] Michael Attaliates, *Historia*, pp. 3–4.

[15] Procopius, *History*, V. xxvii, 26–28; H. B. Dewing trans. III, 259–261.

[16] Procopius, *History*, I. i. 14: H. B. Dewing trans., I, 7.

[17] Procopius, *History*, VIII. xxxii. 7–10; H. B. Dewing trans., v, 376–379.

the Byzantine victory. The Alamanni were simply unable to devise tactics to cope with the rapid-firing, constantly moving horse archers.[18]

The mounted archer appears to have remained the most important figure in the Byzantine army during the last decades of the sixth century.[19]

## III

Lack of adequate sources makes it difficult to evaluate the quality and importance of Byzantine mounted archery in the seventh and eighth centuries. Events occurring in the first half of the ninth century, however, indicate that the Byzantines had failed to maintain their skill at mounted archery. Furthermore, it is extremely important to note that the Byzantine weakness at mounted archery was exposed by a new adversary, the Turks from the steppes of Central Asia. Indeed, the decisive Seljuk victories over the Byzantines in the eleventh century seem less remarkable if one studies the interesting but hitherto neglected record of the first significant military encounter between Byzantines and Turks in the first half of the ninth century.

The 'Abbāsid Caliph Mu'taṣim (833–842) was the first caliph to recruit a large personal army of Turkish slaves from the Central Asian steppes. He hired these Turks to counterbalance his unruly and excessively powerful Khurasanian Arab troops. An elite corps of very skillful mounted archers, the Turks soon became a dominant force in Baghdad politics. Constant friction between them and the Baghdad populace compelled the caliph to move, with these Turks, to a new capital at Samarra in 836.[20] In the following year, 837, the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829–842) successfully stormed the Muslim fortress of Zapetra; Mu'taṣim personally undertook a campaign of reprisal during the summer of 838.[21] The Byzantine historian Joseph Genesius carefully recorded that the caliph included up to 10,000 Turks in this expeditionary force.[22]

Mu'taṣim's immediate aim was to capture Amorion, the largest city in the important Anatolic theme and the birthplace of Theophilus' dynasty.[23] The caliph divided his army into three columns. The division led by the able general Afshīn of Ushrūshana[24] pushed to the town of Dazimon deep in Byzantine Anatolia.[25]

[18] Agathias, *Historiae*, II.9, L. Dindorf ed. in Historici graeci minores, II (Leipzig, 1871), 193–195.

[19] F. Aussaresses, *L'Armée byzantine à la fin du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1909), pp. 51–52. Also, E. Darko, "Influences touraniennes sur l'évolution de l'art militaire des Grecs, des Romains et des Byzantins," *Byzantion*, x (1935), 443–469; XII (1937) 119–147; "Le rôle des peuples nomades cavaliers dans la transformation de l'Empire romain aux premiers siècles du moyen âge," *Byzantion*, XVIII (1948), 85–97.

[20] W. Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall from Original Sources*, 2nd. ed. (London, 1924), p. 513; A. Müller, *Der Islam im Morgen- und Abendland*, I (Berlin, 1885), 520–521; E. Herzfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra* in *Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra*, VI (Berlin, 1948), 91–101.

[21] A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, rev. and trans. by M. Canard and H. Grégoire (Brussels, 1935), 137–143; J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire* (London, 1912), pp. 263 ff.

[22] Joseph Genesius, *Regna*, C. Lachmann ed. (Bonn, 1834), p. 67.

[23] A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 145 ff.

[24] W. Barthold and H. A. R. Gibb, "Afshīn," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I, 2nd. ed. (Leiden and London, 1960), 241.

[25] For the location of Dazimon, see A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 148 n. 5.

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Near this town, at a mountain called "Anzen," Afshīn engaged the emperor in the decisive battle of the campaign on 22 July 838.[26]

Three Byzantine historians—Joseph Genesius, the anonymous continuator of Theophanes, and George Cedrenus — give almost identical accounts of this engagement.[27] According to them, the battle began at dawn. The Byzantine cavalry quickly routed the Arab troops and began to pursue them. The Turkish archers were the only Muslims to stand firm. The balance appeared to have shifted decisively in favor of the Byzantines when these Turkish archers intervened to reverse the outcome. Continuously shooting their arrows, they successfully repulsed the Byzantine troops, who were unable to penetrate the hail of missiles to engage the Turks at close quarters. The Turks, together with the Arabs whom they rallied, finally routed the Byzantine troops, who abandoned the Emperor Theophilus and a small bodyguard on the battlefield.[28]

Afshīn's soldiers briefly surrounded Theophilus and his guards. The manner in which the emperor and his men escaped is significant, for it emphasizes once more the importance of the Turkish archers. The Byzantine sources explain that a heavy rain suddenly fell and relaxed the bowstrings of the Turks. The chronicler George Cedrenus adds that all of the men with the emperor would have perished had it not been for night and this rain.[29] No other known sources mention this decisive role of the Turks, although some writers do mention that a heavy rain did stop the battle.[30]

Since most of the Byzantine army had been destroyed at Dazimon, Muʿtaṣim easily marched to Amorion, swiftly captured and sacked it, probably in August of 838.[31] According to the Arab historian Masʿūdī, the caliph seriously considered an immediate march upon Constantinople.[32] He was unexpectedly called home, however, to quell a conspiracy in favor of his nephew ʿAbbās bin Maʾmūn.[33] This ended the immediate danger to the Byzantine empire.

The campaign of 838, although a serious defeat for the Byzantines, had no immediate consequences of importance. Muʿtaṣim remained entirely occupied with domestic difficulties until his death in 842. After that date, the power of the caliphate rapidly disintegrated. Various Turkish generals usurped effective power.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 156; Bury, *History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, p. 264.

[27] For the dependency of the continuation of Theophanes upon Genesius, see F. Barišić, "Génésios et le continuateur de Théophane," *Byzantion*, xxvIII (1958), 119–133. The most important Arab account of the battle was written by Tabarī. His description of the campaign is detailed, but his report of this engagement is very brief. His account is focused upon the movements of Muʿtaṣim, who was not present at this battle. Tabarī's short account does not mention the presence of the Turks. See the recent annotated translation by E. Marin, *The Reign of Al-Muʿtaṣim*, American Oriental Series, xxxv (New Haven, 1951), p. 66.

[28] Genesius, *Regna*, p. 68; Continuation of Theophanes, *Historia*, pp. 127–128; Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *Historiarum compendium*, II, I. Bekker ed. (Bonn, 1839), 133–134.

[29] Genesius, *Regna*, p. 68; Continuation of Theophanes, *Historia*, p. 128; Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *Historiarum compendium*, II, 134.

[30] Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, III, Part 1 (Paris, 1905), 95.

[31] A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 160–171.

[32] Masʿūdī, *Prairies d'Or*, vII, Barbier de Meynard ed. and trans., 136–137.

[33] A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 175; W. Muir, *Caliphate*, pp. 512–513.

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These generals were fully engaged in attempting to preserve their own positions at Samarra or Baghdad; they had no opportunity to exploit the proven Byzantine vulnerability to expert Turkish archery. The caliph's elite archers remained stationed at the capital or participated in endless civil wars. Mu'taṣim was the last caliph to lead a major expedition into Byzantine territory. The successful Byzantine counter-offensive against the caliphate, which began in the second half of the ninth century, really involved fighting local Arab frontier garrisons, not the elite troops stationed at the capital.[34]

Mu'taṣim's expedition of 838 is an important but forgotten landmark in the long record of Byzantine-Turkish conflict. As the first major test of strength between the two antagonists, it strikingly demonstrated that long before the internal Byzantine disintegration of the eleventh century, skilled Turkish archers could score decisive military successes over the imperial armies.

Though the defeat of 838 should have led the Byzantines to develop good archers to cope with those of the Turks, they still remained very weak in archery at the beginning of the tenth century. An extremely reliable official source, the Emperor Leo VI ("the Wise"), declared in his manual of military tactics "Since archery has wholly been neglected and has fallen into disuse among the Romans (Byzantines) the many present reverses are wont to take place." Leo's statement should not be taken to mean that there were no archers at all in the Byzantine army; in his tactical manual he devotes considerable space to maneuvers requiring archers. It is much more likely that he meant that, generally speaking, the quality of Byzantine archery was very poor in his own day in comparison with the skillful handling of the bow in earlier periods of Byzantine history such as the sixth century (Leo was well acquainted with sixth-century Byzantine military tactics). He did not offer an explanation for this decline of Byzantine archery. Since he understood that the quality of the army's archery could affect its fortune in battle he recommended archery practice strongly.[35] It is uncertain whether Leo personally succeeded in bringing up Byzantine archery to his standards, but archers were available for campaigns during the second half of the tenth century when the empire won numerous victories over its foreign adversaries and achieved its maximum power.[36]

The Byzantine army entered a period of serious deterioration after the death of Basil II in 1025. The sources speak in general terms of decline in army morale, number of troops, and in the quality of their training and equipment.[37] It re-

[34] For general accounts of the Caliphate's rapid decay: Muir, *Caliphate*, pp. 523 ff.; Herzfeld' *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra*, pp. 160 ff. The Byzantine counter-offensive is generally considered to have begun with the decisive victory of the general Petronas in 863 over Arab frontier troops; on this subject see A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, 249 ff. The Arab sources cited by Vasiliev indicate that the Muslim troops defeated at this engagement were local frontier garrison soldiers.

[35] Leo deplored the state of Byzantine archery, *Tactica*, I, R. Vari ed. (Budapest, 1917), 103. General recommendations to improve the quality of archery are found on pp. 99-103 of the same volume.

[36] Scriptor Incertus, *Liber de re militari*, R. Vari ed. (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 1, 2, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21, 30-31, 36 and 44. Also Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, Migne, *P.G.*, cxii, 1220.

[37] Attaliates, *Historia*, pp. 79, 103; Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, p. 31; Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *Historiarum compendium*, ii, 652.

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quires constant practice to maintain facility with a bow, especially if used while mounted; it is likely that the general decay of the army's training and lack of weapons was injurious to the practice of Byzantine archery.

### IV

The first advance signs of a Seljuk Turkish threat to Byzantine Anatolia did not appear until the second decade of the eleventh century. At that time, Turkish nomads, having swept across northern Iran from Transoxania, began to raid some of the independent and semi-independent Armenian principalities bordering the Byzantine empire on the East. The Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan, ruled by the Bagratid dynasty and lying between Lakes Van and Urmia, felt the first shock of these raiders. In 1021 King Senacherim dispatched his son Davith with troops to oppose the invaders. Matthew of Edessa has left a description of the ensuing battle which ascribes a decisive role to the high quality of the Turkish archery:

A terrible battle commenced between the two armies. Up to then, Turk cavalry had never been seen. The Armenians facing the enemy saw those men with their strange appearance, armed with bows and with hair flowing like women. They were not accustomed to protect themselves against the arrows of those infidels and nevertheless they charged with bare swords. Those brave men, advancing as heroes, massacred a great number of Turks. The Turks, for their part, hit many of the Armenians with arrows. At the sight of this, Shapuh [Armenian general] said to Davith: 'O King, retreat, because a large portion of our men have been wounded by arrows. Let us withdraw and put on our armor to resist the arms that we see in the enemy's hands and to protect us from their arrows, . . . [Davith continued to fight for a while, but finally retired with Shapuh. They reported to the King.] They told King Senacherim how the infidels were equipped. This report so distressed that prince that he stopped eating and abandoned himself, in deep meditation, to the greatest sorrow. He spent whole sleepless nights ceaselessly occupied with the examination of the times and the words of the seers, oracles of God, and the holy doctors. He found in the books that the epoch was marked for the irruption of the Turks and he knew that the destruction and end of the world were imminent.[38]

Parts of this passage have often been cited, yet no one appears to have pointed out the critical contribution of the bowmen to the Turkish success. The sword-wielding Armenians, accustomed to fighting at close quarters, were unprepared to engage archers on horseback who could shoot them down at a distance. It was the equipment of the Turks that so distressed Senacherim. He finally decided that he could not defend his realm against the invaders and therefore ceded his kingdom to the Byzantine emperor in exchange for certain titles and estates.[39] It is clear that if the Byzantines were to succeed in repelling the Turks they would have to withstand the mobile archers better than the Armenians had done.

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[38] Matthieu d'Edesse, *Chronique*, p. 41–42. For the location of Vaspurakan, see Ernst Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches* (Brussels, 1935), pp. 169–170. In general, Fr. Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 123–124.

[39] Thomas Ardzrouni, *Histoire*, M. Brosset ed. and trans. in *Collection d'historiens arméniens*, I (St Petersburg, 1874), 248; René Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris, 1947), pp. 553 ff.; Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, p. 168 f.

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### V

Meanwhile the Pechenegs were attacking the Byzantine empire's European frontiers. Leaving south Russia they penetrated and devastated Byzantine-held Bulgaria and Thrace. Like the eastern Turks they were skilled mounted archers. Their habitual use of the bow was mentioned by Michael Attaliates.[40] They became such a menace to the European provinces that Constantine IX (1042–1055) transferred some of the best Byzantine units from Anatolia to end their incursions. Constantine had some mounted archers to use against the Pechenegs,[41] but from the account of Attaliates it appears that many Anatolian soldiers did not stand up well against the Pechenegs' archery:

> Now, while the Pechenegs, covered by their wagons like a wall, awaited the attack of the Byzantines, certain of the Byzantine columns running and yelling charged toward the barbarians' camp. Those barbarians who used bows panicked the horses of their adversaries by the wounds that they inflicted and they forced the Byzantines to flee ignominiously. Each of them took care not to in effect lose his life by an unseen arrow and to be trampled underfoot by those others fleeing with him. A second engagement took place in which the Byzantines experienced a similar rout: the Byzantines fled, the Pechenegs hung on to them.[42]

Again Attaliates emphasized in a later passage how his patron and later Emperor Nicephorus Botaniates was able to save his men from Pecheneg arrows during a retreat that took place in the reign of Constantine IX:

> [Botaniates] ordered his men not to spread out like cattle as the rest of the men were seen to be doing and not to turn their backs to the enemy making themselves into targets for Pecheneg arrows, but to stay at his side and follow him at a leisurely pace in strong formation — an arrangement which could effectively resist the enemy. They agreed among themselves and trusted in the courage of their leader and confided to him their welfare and the responsibility for finding the right direction. Then Botaniates set out with them. The Pechenegs on seeing a small group which advanced in formation and in battle order, made a violent sortie against them. After having ridden around them many times, peppering them with arrows, they retired when they saw that it was impossible to disperse the Byzantines . . . Planning to deprive the Byzantines of their mounts, they shot down their horses with a mass of arrows discharged from a distance. They were unable to engage the Byzantines in hand-to-hand combat for having made trial of close fighting, they had, many times, lost a great number of men killed by Botaniates himself or his men.[43]

These Byzantine troops were unable to make an effective reply to the Pechenegs' arrows; they had to await the arrows passively and hope their shields would stop the missiles.[44] On the other hand these soldiers did not lack courage but fought their best in close combat and in such engagements they were more than a match for the Pechenegs.

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[40] An extensive bibliography on the Pechenegs is found in Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica,* I, 87–90. Attaliates describes the weapons of the Pechenegs in his *Historia,* p. 30.

[41] Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *Historiarum compendium,* II, 602.

[42] Attaliates, *Historia,* pp. 32–33.

[43] *Ibid.,* pp. 39–41.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 42.

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## VI

Byzantine soldiers who fought the Seljuk Turks faced tactical difficulties similar to those which the Pechenegs posed. The Seljuks began seriously to menace the Byzantine eastern frontier during the late 1040's. This frontier ran roughly along the Araxes River and the territory between Lakes Van and Urmia. Border security was entrusted to the famous *akritai* or frontier guards.[45] The southeastern frontier started roughly at Lake Van, ran along the Upper Euphrates and terminated at Antioch-on-Orontes.[46] How were the Seljuks able to penetrate the defenses of these two frontiers to plunder the lightly-guarded interior of the Empire?

One of the most exposed themes on the eastern frontier was the Iberic which included the important city of Theodosiopolis (modern Erzerum).[47] Attaliates specifically attributed its devastation to the effect of excellent Turkish archery on the Byzantine defenders. In his account of Constantine IX's reign he declared,

This people, making continuous annual incursions, did great damage to Byzantine territory. The Byzantines entrusted with the frontiers (*hoi tōn akrōn epistatountes Rhomaioi*) who opposed them were beaten, for their adversaries were well acquainted with the bow, hit the mark not a little, and terrified their enemies with these wounds that they inflicted from a distance. Therefore they systematically overran all Iberia plundering the small towns and villages, ruining large cities and laying waste districts.[48]

According to Attaliates, the Seljuks benefited from their use of archery in not merely one combat but in many engagements over a period of years. Attaliates then abruptly proceeds in a well-known passage to add another reason for the destruction of Iberia, Constantine IX's alienation of Byzantine soldiers by his withdrawal of their right to use public lands.[49] This particular point needs no further emphasis here; it has often been cited. Imperial neglect of the army coupled with the devastating quality of Turkish archery sealed the fate of Iberia. Attaliates' description of the Byzantine terror of the Turks' arrows parallels the fear that struck Senacherim's Armenian troops in the passage cited above from Matthew of Edessa.

In another significant passage Attaliates relates how the Seljuks were able to crack the southeastern frontier:

After the emperor [Constantine IX] died the Turks again overrunning the east in the vicinity of Mesopotamia lay in wait to attack the Byzantine troops camped around Melitene. These units, who were dejected and angry since their supplies were insufficient and they were in need of provisions, were even unable to join the Byzantine troops in

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[45] For very general discussions of the *akritai*, see introduction to the epic *Digenes Akrites* by John Mavrogordato, the translator (Oxford, 1956); A. Rambaud, "Une épopée byzantine au X* siècle: les exploites de Digénis Akritas," *Études sur l'histoire byzantine* (Paris, 1919), pp. 73 ff.; Henri Grégoire, *Ho Digenis Akritas* (New York, 1942).

[46] For a detailed discussion of the eastern and southeastern frontiers of the Byzantine empire, see Ernst Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, pp. 115–190. A recent survey of Byzantine army organization has been written by Helène Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, *Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin au IX*–XI* siècles* (Paris, 1960).

[47] The location of the Byzantine province of "Iberia" is discussed by Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, pp. 161, 211.

[48] Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 44.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

Mesopotamia, being unwilling to cross the Euphrates. Therefore the barbarians having approached through the river, these Byzantines spreading about its exit paths, opposed them. The barbarians, who were archers, easily wounded them from a distance while remaining uninjured themselves until they forced the Byzantines to enter the stream and join battle. But again, those Turks posted on the banks shot arrows at the Byzantines, mauled them very badly and compelled them to flee. A rout ensued; many Byzantines fell, others were captured alive, the survivors escaped to the city of Melitene.[50]

Once more the Byzantines were unable to reply effectively to the Turkish archers from a distance; they were forced to risk an engagement at close quarters. This particular defeat had very serious consequences for the Byzantines. The Seljuks exploited their breakthrough and made a devastating raid, without further serious opposition, into Cappadocia and Cilicia.[51]

## VII

The above evidence is fragmentary but it does show that at scattered points Turkish archery made an important contribution to the critical initial breaching of Byzantine frontier defenses. The open countryside was then exposed to destructive raids. There is evidence that at some other places the Byzantines possessed some archers who resisted the Turks.[52] The Turks did not enjoy an absolute monopoly on the use of the bow and arrow.

Byzantine and Armenian sources indicate that skillful use of mounted archers contributed significantly to the Seljuk defeat and capture of Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes at the decisive battle of Manzikert on 26 August 1071.

In the skirmishing that preceded the battle the Seljuks showed that their mounted archers were more than a match man for man for the Byzantines. A Byzantine troop of adequate size, Attaliates emphasized, engaged some Turks, but since these Turks were archers they killed or wounded so many Byzantine soldiers that the commander Nicephorus Bryennius (a subsequent contender for the emperorship) became terrified and appealed for more troops. Only with a much larger force was he able to drive off the Turks.[53]

The Byzantines took some archers on this campaign. Their foot archers successfully defended their camp against Turkish attacks before the battle began.[54] Pecheneg and Uzz mercenaries were present in the Byzantine army; they were capable mounted archers. According to Matthew of Edessa, they formed the left and right wings of the army respectively at the battle itself. In the midst of the engagement, however, Matthew says that they deserted to the Turks.[55] This action deprived the Byzantines of skillful mounted archers who knew how to fight the Turks with their own methods and weapons. The center of the Byzantine army was then exposed to the Turkish archers who encircled them. Another Armenian historian, Aristakis of Lastiverd, believed that the Seljuk archers played a

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

[52] Cedrenus-Skylitzes, *Historiarum compendium*, II, 592.

[53] In general, see Claude Cahen, "La Campagne de Mantzikert d'après les sources musulmanes," *Byzantion*, IX (1934), 613–642. The preliminary skirmish is described by Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 154.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[55] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronique*, p. 169; also, Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 157.

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prominent role in the outcome of the battle. In attempting to exonerate some Armenian soldiers from charges of desertion during the conflict, he claimed that "without fearing the strong Persian [Turkish] archers, they resisted with manly energy and without turning their backs."[56]

Byzantine sources also indicate that Turkish archery made a contribution to the outcome. According to Attaliates, the fact that the Turks were archers affected a critical tactical decision made by Romanus. A decisive point in the battle occurred when the emperor, who had been pursuing the elusive Turks, resolved to order an end to the pursuit and a return to his base. An important factor in his calculations was the fear of a counterattack by Turk archers[57] which emphasizes his healthy respect for them. His decision to retire is significant because in Attaliates' account the orderly Byzantine withdrawal quickly turns into a rout due to treachery. Thus the fact that the Turks were formidable archers was one among a chain of factors contributing to the emperor's defeat.[58]

The Caesar Nicephorus Bryennius, writing several decades after the battle, also attributed an important role to Seljuk archery in determining the final defeat and capture of the emperor, although his account differs from that of the other historians:

> Taranges [eunuch of the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan] divided the Turkish army into many groups and devised ambushes and traps and ordered his men to surround the Byzantines and to discharge a rain of arrows against them from all sides. The Byzantines, seeing their horses struck by arrows, were forced to pursue the Turks. They followed the Turks who pretended to flee. But they suffered heavily when they fell into ambushes and traps. The emperor, having resolved to accept a general engagement, slowly advanced hoping to find an army of Turks, attack it and decide the battle, but the Turks scattered. But wheeling, with great strength and shouting, they attacked the Byzantines and routed their right wing. Immediately the rear guard withdrew. The Turks encircled the emperor and shot from all directions. They prevented the left wing from coming to the rescue for they got in its rear and forced it to flee. The emperor, completely deserted and cut off from aid, drew his sword against the enemy and killed many and compelled them to flee. But encircled by the mass of the enemy, he was struck in the hand and recognized and surrounded on all sides. His horse was hit by an arrow, slipped and fell, and threw down his rider. And in this manner the Byzantine emperor was made prisoner . . . [59]

Bryennius' account illustrates how skillful use of archery gave the Seljuks the initiative in the battle. Apparently the Byzantine cavalry described in this passage was not armed with bows. It was provoked into making a hasty attack against the Turks to stop the showers of arrows which were picking off its horses.

## VIII

In the decade that followed the battle of Manzikert the Seljuks overran most of

[56] Aristakis of Lastiverd, *Histoire d'Arménie*, E. Prud'homme trans. (Paris, 1864), p. 144.

[57] Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 161.

[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 161–163.

[59] Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, pp. 41–42. "Thus Romanus Diogenes, like Crassus of old, paid the penalty for attacking a swarm of horse-archers in a open rolling country, where he had cover neither for his flanks nor for his rear," Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (London, 1924), ɪ, 221.

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Anatolia. The Byzantine army as a whole was shattered although a few units attempted to stem the invasion. Alexius Comnenus was able to secure some archers who briefly repulsed the Turks in a small action,[60] but scattered references in Byzantine sources indicate that extensive and skillful use of the bow continued to be an important Turkish asset. During the reign of Michael VII (1071–1078) Alexius Comnenus was nearly killed by Turkish arrows when he attempted to engage his foes with a lance; his horse was shot from under him.[61] The Frankish mercenary chief Roussel de Bailleul and his men were armed with lances in another engagement. They attempted to ward off some attacking Turks. The Turks, plying their bows, killed the Franks' horses and wounded and captured Roussel and his men.[62]

The Byzantines themselves appreciated the effectiveness of the Turks with the bow and began hiring them as mercenaries. It is as archers that these mercenaries quickly proved their value in the civil war between the imperial pretender, Nicephorus Bryennius, and the Emperor Nicephorus Botaniates. The battle of Kalovryia in Thrace settled the contest in favor of the latter. It was Botaniates' Turkish archers who arrived on the battlefield at the critical moment and determined the outcome of the conflict:

> Immediately with a war-whoop the Turks let their arrows fly and the commanders of the units [of Bryennius] remained stunned by the suddenness of the event. But since they were men experienced in warfare, they strove to reestablish order, urging the brave part of their men to show enough courage to win over the others. After a while they reformed ranks and attacked the Turks bravely.
>
> But the Turks, fleeing precipitously, attracted them toward prepared ambushes until they had almost reached the first ambush. When the Turks reached it, they themselves turned around and those in ambush swiftly ran out and shot the Byzantines with arrows, inflicting casualties on both men and horses.[63]

By this combination of expert archery and ambushes the Turks eventually routed the partisans of Bryennius and captured Bryennius himself.

Appreciating the importance of archery, the Byzantines in the closing years of the eleventh century (after virtually all of Anatolia was lost) not only hired Turkish archers but also strove to bring the skill of their own archers up to decent standards. In 1090/1 Alexius Comnenus, according to his daughter Anna, gave instructions to those of his men who had some acquaintance with the bow. He instructed them on how they must hold their bows and send their arrows.[64] By the accession of Manuel Comnenus in 1143 the Byzantines had made the bow and arrow the principal weapon for their troops.[65] By then, of course, it was too late: the Turks had consolidated their control over most of Anatolia.

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[60] Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, pp. 67–69.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[62] Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 191.

[63] Nicephorus Bryennius, *Commentarii*, pp. 141–142.

[64] Anne Comnène, *Alexiade*, ii, B. Leib ed. and trans. (Paris, 1943), 121.

[65] John Cinnamus, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, A. Meineke ed. (Bonn, 1836), p. 125.

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## IX

It is not astonishing that the Turks were able to overrun Anatolia in the eleventh century. In the ninth century they had, in the service of Caliph Mu'taṣim, first met and defeated the Byzantines in combat by means of their archery. The Byzantine chroniclers were impressed by their skill and recorded it. In the eleventh century the Turks reappeared on their own. Again the Byzantine and Armenian sources were struck by their ability to use the bow accurately and rapidly from horseback; such writers as Attaliates attributed important Turkish successes to their skillful handling of this weapon. The Byzantines were often forced to charge through a hail of Turkish arrows to engage the Turks at close quarters. The Turks picked off Byzantines and Armenians from a safe distance while sometimes remaining uninjured themselves.[66] It appears that an important reason for the Byzantine empire's employment of Pecheneg, Cuman, and later even Turkish mercenaries — so often condemned by modern writers — was the recognized need to secure sufficient well trained mounted archers to fight the invading Turks on their own terms. It is clear from the sources that there were some archers in the Byzantine army but in some of the combats described in this essay it appears that there were no Byzantine mounted archers — or at least an insufficient number — present to oppose the Turkish ones. It is impossible, given the fragmentary records, to determine with any accuracy how often a complete disparity existed in Byzantine-Seljuk engagements. What is certain is that Byzantine and Armenian sources clearly ascribe a number of critical Seljuk military victories to the Turks' skillful handling of the bow. Exensive use of able mounted archers helped the Turks wrest Anatolia from the Byzantines in the eleventh century just as it had once served Justinian's generals in their conquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths. One would not maintain that Turkish excellence in archery was the single cause for the Seljuk conquest of Anatolia. But it seems to have been an important and hitherto unnoticed military factor, which, combined with the social, economic and political weaknesses of Byzantium which Byzantinists have uncovered, operated to enable the Seljuks to overcome Byzantine resistance.[67]

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[66] For a general discussion of Turkish tactics, see R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193,* pp. 75–83.

# [11]

Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy

Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr

In the pre-nuclear age, and in particular before the nineteenth century, military strategists, historians, and presumably many diplomats devoted less interest to the accidental outbreak of war than to the role of accident and random factors affecting the course of a war in progress. Although those earlier strategists expressed confidence in the utility of studying the history of wars and military science—because they believed that such studies could assist one in achieving military success despite adverse quantitative odds, they always remained cautious about the unexpected turns that violent conflict could take, especially at moments of large-scale intensive combat. They accepted the use of military force, but they repeatedly warned against excessive confidence in one's ability to predict, to control, or to direct the course of a war once full-scale hostilities had commenced; they stressed the imponderables in war. They assumed that, of course, decision makers should try to know the military and political situation as fully and as accurately as possible but they should also realize that the unknown is a given in war and that somehow one should try to allow for it (without knowing its specific features or dimensions in the particular instance), or at least expect that it would be present, in any attempt to make estimates or to develop any plan of operations.

It would be erroneous to assume that, in the centuries that preceded the twentieth, there was an absence of awareness, within the leaderships of the sophisticated powers, of the risks of war. In fact, if one examines the record of warfare in some of those centuries, it is evident that there was little inclination to engage in what some modern scholars have called 'glorious' war. Throughout many earlier centuries there usually was a preference to exercise caution in carrying out military operations, and one of the specific reasons invoked by some of those contemporaries was the fear of the unknown, the random, the accidental, or other uncertainties of fortune in battle. That proclivity to caution prevailed among established kingdoms, republics, and empires until the Napoleonic Wars at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This does not mean that there were no hotheads, but sophisticated treatises on war and sophisticated commanders usually displayed a reluctance to gamble everything in the pitched battle. In fact, they often received explicit instructions to that effect from their governments; the decisive battle held too many pitfalls, political and economic as well as military.

There was a prudent preference in avoiding resort to the maximum possible level of ferocity of violence within the existing levels of military technology, weaponry, and tactical skills and methodologies. It was repeatedly within the capabilities of victorious powers to exterminate the population of a defeated one, but the actual cases of adoption of such a policy are very limited—it tended not to be in the victorious power's interest. Political and military leaders were usually mindful of the difficulty of replacing losses among relatively expensive and difficult to recruit and difficult to train soldier-specialists in those eras of relatively small armies. The comparatively modern doctrine of the maximum concentration of force had not yet become universal and dominant strategic wisdom.

The absence of modern means of surveillance and rapid communications contributed much to the fog of war in the centuries that preceded the twentieth. But even in the slow-moving warfare of earlier centuries, it was often future expectations about war that determined efforts to limit the scope of and arrange the termination of war. Politics usually placed strong contraints on the choice and implementation of specific military operations in a war already in progress, even though matters did not always turn out as those who were establishing the contraints expected. Seldom did sophisticated powers wage wars of annihilation. There was no renunciation of the possible resort to armed force, but there was a reluctance to commit all of one's forces, especially in the initial engagements, until one had a feel for the resources, capabilities, and limitations of the opponent.

The recently published book of John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, has brought the problem of combat back to the attention of many historians. Keegan, of course, made no attempt to refer to Byzantium, but he tends to avoid broader questions of strategy, generalship, and logistics, even though they largely shape the context in which his combatants encountered the face of battle.

Military history has been out of fashion for so long that it is necessary, in a time of historians' fascination with economic and socio-cultural aspects of history, to point out that at times the military dimension of historical reality has been important and even decisive; that military events have not always been merely the objective working out of social, economic and intellectual conditions and trends; that at least occasionally military decisions and actions, which, of course, are never entirely dissociated from other dimensions of historical reality, do exert their own influence on events and in the creation of realities. The study of battle and strategy

is usually regarded as a boring 'trumpets and drums' approach to history; one with unwarranted obsession with minute details.

Strategy and stratagems are two types of thought that are indissolubly linked with Byzantium. Few Byzantinists read the substantial corpus of Byzantine strategic texts, or even any one of them, yet they are a very characteristic part of Byzantium's intellectual activities. I shall not presume to talk here about the complex textual problems of Byzntine strategic writings. Instead, these are some observations on broader features of Byzantine attitudes to the handling of strategy, operations, and stratagems. Most of the examples cited here are from the fifth through the eighth centuries. It is important to understand the meaning of certain concepts. Some of what the Byzantines included in strategic manuals may be classified by modern theorists not as 'strategy' but 'tactics' or 'military operations.' Byzantine terminology derived in large part from earlier Greek usage. Thus, the Byzantines, like the Greeks, used *strategia*, in the sense of knowledge pertaining to the art of command of an army by a general, or generalship, but *taxis* or tactics in the sense of military movements. Byzantine strategists tend to discuss strategy, operations, and tactics together with stratagems even though Byzantine writers are aware of distinctions between, at a minimum, tactics and strategy. It is always necessary to remember that primary sources rarely permit the Byzantinist to have any detailed and accurate understanding of Byzantium's battles.

To illustrate the difficulties inherent in investigating Byzantine military strategy, it is instructive to examine some aspects of Byzantine military conditions and thinking from the sixth and seventh centuries, especially from the Age of Emperor Justinian I and from late sixth-and early seventh-century warfare, as seen in the *Strategikon* of Maurice, ca. A.D. 600.

War was a given and accepted condition in the sixth century. But contemporaries viewed war from several perspectives. It could be a means to something: thus in the eyes of Emperor Justinian (527-565), arms embellished and sustained the imperial majesty.[1] To the pragmatic anonymous author of a manual of strategy that was written late in the reign of Justinian I, war was the greatest evil: "I know well that war is a great evil, even the greatest of evils. But because enemies shed our blood in fulfillment of an incitement of law and valor, and because it is wholly necessary for each man to defend his own fatherland and his fellow countrymen with words, writings, and acts, we have decided to write about strategy, through which we shall be able not only to fight but to over-

come the enemy."[2] The historian Procopios of Caesarea even asserted
in an exaggerated passage that "war and the royal office are agreed to
be the greatest of all things among mankind."[3] He implicitly agreed
with the anonymous strategist that reflection on methods and prob-
lems of warfare could assist the outcome of combat. As Procopios put it,
"most of all, war is wont to succeed by means of good counsel." War was
potentially intelligible, but only to some extent, and no Byzantine his-
torian had a greater appreciation than did Procopios for the risks inherent
in war, "so that we shall never reasonably go to war straightaway."[4] A
word of caution: one cannot be certain what were the true opinions of
Procopios on war; he may be repeating gnomic statements from uniden-
tified earlier authors. What is certain is that he wrote down these gen-
eralizations in the reign of Justinian, that he had experienced war, but
his remarks may not refer exclusively to his own beliefs.

The soldiers of Justinian were not, and probably did not, believe
themselves to be inferior to their opponents in quality or modernity
of weapons, training, or the tactical and strategic skills of their com-
manders. Procopios gave special praise to the masterful horse archery
of contemporary Byzantine soldiers, and he contrasted it favorably with
the role and technique of archery in the age of Homer.[5] Although his
comparison imitated earlier Greek historians' exaltation of the uniqueness
of wars in their own age, there is no reason to doubt that Procopios and
his contemporaries believed that the Byzantine soldiers of his day were
inferior to no one. The soldiers of Justinian benefited from their empire's
control of the sea and from the cumulative military and  diplomatic
experience of the Graeco-Roman world. Devotion to military technique,
to discipline within the ranks, to mastery and adaptation of new drills, to
standardized commands, to breaking down the elements of the army into
precise and uniform units, with routinized procedures, may seem normal
and even dull, but those procedures distinguished Late Roman and early
Byzantine armies from those of their opponents and helped to explain
their effectiveness despite their frequent lack of numerical superiority. At
the beginning of the reign of Justinian, there was no deficiency in the
caliber of the soldiers themselves. Byzantine armies continued to change
throughout the reign of Justinian, indeed throughout the entire sixth
century, in order to adjust to new conditions of warfare.

A perusal of sixth-century sources reveals a contemporary
appreciation for the importance of the role of timing in warfare, for
the interdependence of one strategic move with another, and above
all, a prudent respect for the unknown. Procopios claimed that General
Belisarios had stated that, "it is natural for warfare to be subject to the

unexpected."[6] The unknown is always a part of warfare and in the usually slow-paced and poorly informed world of the sixth century, it exercised a strong influence on the course of warfare. The Vandals' absolute lack of information about the dispatch and arrival of warships of a Byzantine expeditionary force under the Byzantine general Belisarios contributed heavily to the victorious Byzantine campaign in Africa in 533-534. Such total surprise is rare in warfare, and it was not repeated on such a scale in the reign of Justinian. But the unknown, or unexpected, sometimes fortified by false information, remained. The masking of intentions, the employment of ruses and deceptions attained a level of perfection under Belisarios that later Byzantine captains never equalled.

Long distances and slow communications combined to affect the armies of Justinian. It was difficult to make intelligent decisions which had been filtered through many persons. The absence of Justinian from the field—following the precedent of eastern emperors ever since the death of Theodosios I in 395—required him to entrust the decision making to generals who sometimes even acted as diplomats plenipotentiary. Distances and slow communications contributed to organizational problems, some of which were not unique to the reign of Justinian: procurement, distribution and maintenance of arms and equipment, provisions, delegation of authority and the deployment of soldiers and horses.

It was difficult to enforce commands. Generals did not always recognize each other's competence and authority. They sometimes even refused to cooperate in the execution of military operations. Most commanders confronted this problem, even Belisarios. Dissension between commanders existed throughout Late Roman and Byzantine history, but it reached one of its peaks in the reign of Justinian.

The surprise attack by Justinian on the Vandal kingdom in 533 was an exceptional campaign which resulted in a swift and decisive military victory. Most wars in the reign of Justinian, however, were protracted and characterized by frequent avoidance of decisive and potentially bloody battles. The reasons for the dominance of this protracted mode of warfare, even though many of its practitioners were mounted, were complex, but among them was the finite amount of available resources, that is, men and material.

The mode of warfare that already was evident in the reign of Justinian was to be the dominant form of Byzantine warfare for more than five hundred years. It did not originate in the reign of Justinian. The inconclusive warfare on the eastern frontier with the Persians in the fifth and sixth centuries was an immediate precedent, and probably also a front where soldiers and generals gained some valuable ex-

perience in the kind of warfare that later prevailed in Italy in the 540s. But there were much older precedents in Greek manuals of warfare from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, about which more will be said later. Instead of decisive combat, the norm was slow and crafty war of attrition, *Ermattungskrieg*, as Hans Delbrueck aptly described it, in contrast to *Niederwerfungskrieg*, war of annihilation.[7] Procopios identified Belisarios with the conduct of craftiness and attrition when he stated that the Ostrogothic King Totila "wanted to come to a straightforward decision by battle with them [the Byzantines] on a plain rather than to struggle by means of wiles and clever contrivances."[8] Procopios explained elsewhere, "since men do not always take confidence in fortune, they do not enter straightforward into danger, even if they boast that they excel over the enemy in every respect, but  by deceit and some contrivance they strive to go around their opponents. For there is danger for them in an even match, because there is uncertainty about the outcome."[9]  These words described the reality of warfare in the age of Justinian. It was a warfare of patience, timing, cleverness, and endless maneuvering. Glory and zeal in battle were not regarded as essential qualities for success in war, which was difficult and serious business. As Procopios coldly observed, "enthusiasm is advantageous and very praiseworthy, insofar as it is moderate and brings no harm to its possessors."[10] Both Procopios and the anonymous strategist implied that although the outcome of a particular war or individual clash of arms might be probable, it was impossible to control all of the variables, hence the desirability for caution and prudence.

Another contemporary source on war, one that was written after Belisarios' campaigning in Italy, was an  anonymous manual of strategy, entitled *Peri Strategikes* ("On Strategy"), which provides an account of warfare that is consistent with that of Procopios. The strategist emphasized defensive warfare, not conquest. His manual was permeated with the realization that there were situations in which the Byzantines might find themselves inferior to their opponents. He attempts to advise his readers on how to cope with an enemy who enjoys a superiority in numbers to one's own forces. He also praised other stratagems that avoided heavy casualties, for example, the wisdom of Belisarios in destroying the supplies of his enemies because they were thus compelled to disperse their own soldiers. The anonymous strategist recommended that, "If the enemy attacks and we are unable to respond," the Byzantines should raise up other nations to force the enemy to call off his incursions. Implicit in his manual is confidence that intelligence can help to bring success in warfare despite an adverse numerical balance, yet also implicit is a recognition

that numbers are usually important in war, and especially for its eventual outcome; and that the Byzantine Empire was now entering a period in which it did not have satisfactory numbers of soldiers. Especially valuable is the manual's information about the effect of campaigning against the Ostrogoths in Italy (during the reign of Justinian I) and Byzantine strategic and tactical assumptions.[11]

The Justinianic reconquest of Italy is an example of a protracted war that became impossible to halt until the destruction of Byzantium's opponent. The expenses on the Byzantine and Ostrogothic sides were very large. The various diplomatic missions in search of a negotiated settlement all failed, because of Justinian's conviction of the rectitude and probability of success of his policies, in addition to his rather good intelligence on affairs in other areas of the known world. Superior political and military information gave the Byzantines a decisive advantage over the Germanic kingdoms of the Vandals and Ostrogoths. Attempts to end the military deadlock between the Byzantines and Ostrogoths also failed because each party had its own advantage in mind. As long as Justinian could believe that his soldiers were ultimately the victors, there was no possibility of a negotiated settlement.

The Byzantine victory over the Ostrogoths depended, in the long run, heavily on the Byzantine exploitation of the unknown. The Byzantines created too many uncertainties for the Ostrogoths to penetrate in the initial clashes. The Byzantines succeeded in exploiting some importantly perceived asymmetries in weaponry and fighting techniques between themselves and the Ostrogoths in Italy. Procopios explained that Belisarios succeeded in exploiting the absence of mobile horse archers among the Ostrogoths:

> In private his friends asked . . . why he had been confident that he would overcome them [the Ostrogoths] decisively in the war. And he said that in engaging with them, at the first with only a few men, he had noticed just what was the difference between the two armies, so that if he should fight his battles with them in a force which was in strength proportionate to theirs, the multitudes of the enemy could inflict no injury upon the Romans [=Byzantines] by reasons of the smallness of their numbers. And the difference was this, that practically all the Romans [Byzantines] and their allies, the Huns, are good mounted bowmen, but not a man among the Goths has had practice in this branch, for their horsemen are accustomed to use only spears and swords, while their bowmen enter battle on foot and under the cover of heavy-armed men. So the horsemen, unless the engagement is at close quarters, have no means of defending themselves against op-

ponents who use the bow, and, therefore, can easily be reached by the arrows and destroyed; and as for the footsoldiers, they can never be strong enough to make sallies against men on horseback. It was for these reasons, Belisarios declared, that the barbarians had been defeated by the Romans [Byzantines] in these last engagements.[12]

The technique for waging a war of attrition and deception and ruses is explained in another major Byzantine strategic treatise which has survived, the *Strategikon* of Maurice, probably written between 580 and 635, even though there is controversy about the identity of the author. This treatise embodies Byzantine military wisdom and practice at the beginning of the seventh century and serves as the basis for all subsequent extant major Byzantine military writings, including the often cited *Taktika* of Emperor Leo VI, written ca. 900.[13]

The author of the *Strategikon* advises his readers to fashion craftiness and cunning in war and to avoid open battles, that it is often preferable to strike the enemy "by means of deceptions or raids or hunger" instead of open battle.[14] He warns against engaging the enemy in combat or showing them your own strength before you know their disposition of forces and their plans. He recommends the use of guile in war as efficacious. He calls attention to the disastrous example of the general who loses most of his army in one battle. There is great emphasis on caution in making war: "The suspicion-loving general is safe in war."[15] He advises against mixing allied barbarian forces (i.e., from various barbarian tribes, such as Germanic, Arab, Hunnic and other peoples) with Byzantine troops. Instead, they should be placed in their own camps, and assigned their own routes so that they cannot learn your deployment and strategy and then betray them to your enemy.[16] He cautions against using open warfare. The object of warfare is the defeat and disruption, not necessarily the slaughter, of the enemy. In fact, the author of the *Strategikon* counsels against using the technique of encirclement because it would encourage the enemy to remain and to risk battle. He advises that it is better to allow an encircled enemy to flee to avoid forcing him to take a life-or-death stand, which would be costly in casualties to the encircling party. There is no more eloquent testimony to the desire to avoid decisive battle.[17]

The author of the *Strategikon* recommends that the general should command his army "using tactics and strategy alertly."[18] He adds that, "By strategy, using opportunities and places, and by means of sudden undertakings in order to deceive the enemy, it is possible to reach one's goal without open battles."[19] In a major statement of his philosophy of warfare and the use of strategy, he states that, "Just as no ship can

sail the sea without a captain, so one cannot defeat the enemy without tactics and strategy, through which not only a strong mass of enemy can be beaten with God's help, but also a much larger number. Because wars will not be decided, as some uneducated men believe, through boldness and the number of men, but by God's favor, through tactics and strategy, about which it is more important to concern oneself than about the assembling of an inopportune mass, for the former brings safety and utility [effectiveness] while the latter brings defeat and harmful cost."[20]

Some other military wisdom from the *Strategikon* includes the following statements that reemphasize the author's stress on caution and prudence: "Wars resemble the hunt." Again, "The wise general learns as much as possible about his enemy and attacks at the weakest point." "Because open and frontal attack on the enemy, even with the belief in winning over him, causes the outcome of the affair to be dangerous and [results in] heavy losses. Whence it is typical for those who do not think to win a victory with heavy losses, which brings only empty fame."[21] The author advises that, "One must avoid letting the enemy know your tactical dispositions."

Other advice includes prudent and conservative reminders: "It is safe and useful to win over the enemy by good counsel and strategy instead of by brawn and force. For the one who brings a result without harm while the other brings it with losses."[22] "Courage and order can do more good than the mass of combatants, because often the situation of the land helps the weaker."[23] "What is advantageous to you is disadvantageous to the enemy, and what is helpful to him is what you should oppose."[24] "Not all peoples use the same tactics and strategy. One cannot lead an army with a single plan, but one must use experience, the nature of things, and make decisions according to the possibility of developments. There are many forms of attack."[25] These extracts suffice to give some impression of the sophisticated mentality of the author's approach to war, which he regards as far more complex than the employment of sheer power.

One of the most obvious characteristics of the Byzantine Empire was her long duration for which historians list many causes, such as the effectiveness of her bureaucracy and other institutions, the soundness of her coinage, and the astuteness of her diplomacy. I have become increasingly convinced, as a military historian, that her prevailing commitment to a military policy of generally avoiding decisive battle also contributed substantially to her long life as an empire. By that I do not mean merely her readiness to resort to diplomatic and financial devices of great variety to solve military threats. These were important

but they have been extensively described and analyzed in many broad and specialized publications. Instead, I am referring to the tendency to avoid, in much of the empire's history, risking everything in one decisive battle. Byzantium's leadership was not always able to avoid battle—the years 1071, 1176, 1204, and 1453 witnessed battles that were decisive for Byzantine history. Yet long periods elapsed without decisive battle.

Drs. Ralph-Johannes Lilie and John Haldon have discussed, in recent publications, the general characteristics of the Byzantine strategy in the seventh and eighth centuries, especially after Byzantium's loss of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt to the Arabs. They both rightly call attention to what they note as the basic avoidance of battle on the part of the Byzantines in their defense of the remaining Byzantine territories in Asia Minor against the Arabs, and they see in these efforts to create strongholds, close off mountain passes, an anticipation of the famous and better documented Byzantine tactics against Arab raiders of the ninth and tenth centuries. They are correct to point out these continuities.[26] Of course, there were many reasons for the Byzantines following such a passive strategy after their crushing defeats at the hands of the Arabs in the 630s and early 640s, including the small size and shattered morale and cohesiveness of the remaining Byzantine manpower. It was dangerous to risk one more time what little remained of it.

It is evident from reading the *Strategikon* of Maurice that by A.D. 600 Byzantium had developed strategic and tactical doctrines out of her Graeco–Roman heritage of military writings and from her military experiences in the sixth-century wars against the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Persians. Techniques and military assumptions that were in use by A.D. 600 remained, with modifications to suit new ethnic foes, until and beyond Byzantium's collapse against the Seljuk Turks in the eleventh century. A critical element was a readiness to exploit uncertainties while minimizing one's own casualties, preferring a combination of artifices, diplomacy, delay, dissimulation, sowing dissension, corruption, and above all, employing caution and the indirect approach to warfare, in an effort to reduce risk and gambling to a minimum in warfare. The greatest weakness of these techniques of ruses, deception, clever stratagems, and commitment to war of slow attrition was the development of excessive overconfidence and intellectualism in military operations. The result was an underestimation of basic underlying forces, such as the role of numbers, in the outcome of war.

Byzantine strategic thought did not emerge *ex nihilo*. It was a continuation, often a conscious imitation and adaptation of formal Greek strategical writings that stretched as far back as Aeneas Tacticus, if not

earlier, and of works on strategy and stratagems written by Greeks in the Roman period or by Romans who adapted and translated and paraphrased Greek strategic writings, for the most part. These well-known facts create many problems for anyone attempting to evaluate the content, originality, value, and accuracy of Byzantine strategic writings. The question is: How much derives not from the Byzantine period but from the writers of much earlier centuries—a problem which is common in the interpretation of Byzantine texts, which Professor C. Mango pointed out so well in his Inaugural Lecture on "Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror"?

The Greek strategists, in particular Aeneas Tacticus, Asklepiodotos, Onasander, Arrian, and Aelian, were not distinguished by their intellectual brilliance; as military thinkers they were greatly inferior to the Greek generals of antiquity. They have, however, left a record of formations, stratagems, maxims, and injunctions which they did not, for the most part, invent, but were compiling, organizing and recording for their readers. Yet their corpus of strategic writings provided for Byzantine strategists many things: not merely the format and subjects for the education of a general, and not merely antiquarian descriptions of hoplites and phalanxes, which had become anachronistic long before the Byzantine Empire (yet note the remarks of Dr. Everett Wheeler about the possible usefulness of the phalanx in the Flavian period).[27] What they provided were some basic ways of thinking about war, including the elementary ones of order, discipline, and the creation of commonly understood verbal commands for movements or evolutions in combat. Their emphasis on these largely explains the Byzantine generals' and strategists' attentiveness to these problems. Devotion to strict order and discipline was a distinctive feature of Byzantine armies in the Middle Byzantine Period, as is evident from a reading of Byzantine strategic writings. But some of what critics regard as the most distinctive features of Byzantine warfare and strategy, the indirect approach, as Sir Basil Liddell-Hart expressed it, or Sir Charles Oman in his *History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages,* or what Drs. Lilie and Haldon perceive, correctly, in Byzantine defensive policies in Asia Minor in the late seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries—avoidance of battle, warfare of slow attrition, initial passive resistance to invaders of the countryside, followed by a tactic of seeking to cut off and destroy the invaders piecemeal— find their anticipation in some of the early Greek strategists and their extant works.

Consider, for example, this following passage:

Often, a general, on hearing that the enemy are but a day's march distant, will call out his troops and lead them forward, hurrying to come to close quarters with the enemy, who, purposely retreating, do not make a stand against him; and so he assumes that they are afraid and pursues them. This continues until they come into a broken country, surrounded by mountains on all sides, and the general, unsuspecting, still attacks them; next, as he marches against their positions, he is cut off by the enemy from the road by which he led his army in. They seize the passes in front of him, and all the heights round about, and thus confine their enemies in a sort of cage. But the general is carried away by his impetuosity, in the belief that he is pursuing a fleeing enemy, without noticing who is approaching: and later, on looking before and behind and on both sides, and seeing all the hillsides full of the enemy, he and his army will be destroyed by javelins, or unable to fight and unwilling to surrender, he will cause all to die of hunger, or by surrender enable the enemy to dictate whatever terms they wish. Therefore, retreats on the part of the enemy should be suspected and not stupidly followed; the general should observe the country rather than the enemy, and notice through what sort of terrain he is leading his forces; and he should either refrain from advancing and turn aside from the route, or if he does advance, he should take precautions, leaving forces to hold the mountain passes and connecting defiles. . .[28]

This is not a Byzantine text on Byzantine-Arab warfare of the tenth century in Anatolia, and it is not (as the word javelins indicates) from any other Byzantine strategic manual of the Middle Byzantine Period. It is from Onasander, a Greek strategist, who wrote in the first century A.D., but was widely recopied and was presumably read by would-be strategists in the Middle Byzantine Period.

The evidence for the debt of Byzantine strategists to earlier Greek strategists can be demonstrated by other copious parallels in extant texts, well documented by some of the editors of these texts, and by the explicit reference in such authors as John Lydos in the middle of the sixth century, who includes in his list of strategists such authors as Aelian, Arrian, Aeneas, and Onasander. But the Byzantine strategists' debt to which I refer is the counsel to seek to avoid the risks of battle except under the most favorable circumstances, and to use every conceivable nonmilitary device to improve the likelihood of accomplishing one's purposes with the minimum of losses. Therefore, the crafty

techniques that Crusaders later hated and despised and which some modern Byzantinists and twentieth-century military experts, including Basil Liddell-Hart and Herman Kahn, extol in Byzantine attitudes to the practices of warfare, did not suddenly appear in the seventh, ninth, or tenth centuries. The corpus of Greek strategic literature, in addition to its inclusion of detailed discussion of how to wage battle successfully, also included a group of instructions about how to avoid battle and how to maximize military gains with a minimum of fighting. These counsels, including how to sow dissension among one's enemies, the role of treachery and plots and factional alignments in creating decisive turns or opportunities for military success, were a continuity; an inheritance from the Greek strategists of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. They represent a genuine strand of continuity of Hellenic thought and tradition in the Byzantine thought-world. As the Byzantine Empire's external military crisis and manpower crisis intensified in the late sixth and seventh centuries, it was natural for men to look for military advice to the often very outdated existing manuals of strategy, stratagems, and tactics that had proven successful long before. Thus the extensive resort to craft, cunning, and indirect warfare, with the aim of winning without risking much decisive bloody combat, typified in the Italian campaigns of Belisarios, in much of the wisdom of the anonymous strategists of the sixth century, and the *Strategikon* of Maurice, is not an anachronistic return by an adaptation of very old Greek strategists' counsel about avoiding pitched battle to the austere realities of the sixth and early seventh centuries. Such was essential to the very frame of reference of strategists when compilers and generals consulted them in the sixth and seventh centuries in the search for solutions to the empire's dilemmas. The continuity in Hellenic strategic thinking was not merely in its specific borrowings of injunctions and details of maneuvers, but in attitudes of caution, prudence, cunning, and awareness of one's own limitations and of the possibility of risk and the random role of accidents in decisive combat; in short, in ways of thinking about waging war.

It is incorrect, while stressing the neglected Byzantine debt to earlier Greek military literature for the proclivity to or inspiration for warfare of delay, stratagems, and craft, to depreciate the distinctiveness of Byzantine strategies and tactics, especially those that scholars discern in the middle of the seventh century and later. But there has been neglect of earlier Greek strategic thought's contribution to and continuity with Byzantine military thought. After all, Clausewitz noted, in *Vom Kriege*, that principles of war are simple, that what is difficult is their

implementation. The general ideas about how to wage effective war-
fare while minimizing risks and casualities though mastery of timing
and craft and subversion and indirect attack were already available in
the extant corpus of strategic writings. The challenge for the Byzan-
tines in the military crises and conditions of diminished material and
human resources of the seventh century and later was to adapt those
precedents and principles to specific new conditions in a world with
some changing military technologies.

The conviction that there was utility in using the mind to devise
cunning stratagems, ruses, and techniques of war to wage war effectively
yet cheaply was a two-edged inheritance from antiquity. It encouraged an
admirable proclivity to use one's head in thinking about war, yet it also
many times created a dangerous even disastrous overconfidence in the
ability of the strategist to offset, through cleverness, quantitatively and
perhaps also qualitatively superior material and human resources and
power.

It is probable that the longevity of the Byzantine Empire owes very
much to its adoption of a cautious military strategy that avoided bloody
and risky pitched battles. Such battles did occur, but the tendency and
prevailing policy was to try to avoid them. Byzantium missed many
opportunities because of the adoption of this cautious military strat-
egy. Yet her resources of manpower and materials were finite and the
parsimonious and calculating employment of them in the late sixth
through most of the eleventh centuries helped to reduce the chances of
some gamble resulting in a total military catastrophe or the dissolution
of the empire. Risk minimization had its rewards; Byzantium assumed
that the unknown exerted great effects upon the course and outcome of
war. Therefore, she strove, even in an era of low lethality of weapons,
for a multifaceted defensive strategy that did not rely exclusively on
military force, but also on diplomacy, prudence, superior use of intell-
igence, and the exploitation of the enemy's weaknesses.

Several distinctive features of strategy in the modern world are
absent from Byzantine strategic texts and from Byzantine historians'
description of strategy and tactics. The early modern appreciation of
the need for the general ideally to possess the coup d'oeil, the ability
to discern at a glance the principal strategic features of a situation or
piece of land—heavily emphasized in military literature between the
middle of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—is missing.
Similarly, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' emphasis—ever
since the campaigns of Napoleon—on the principle of concentration of
force, is not evident. Byzantine strategists would not necessarily have

disagreed, I think, with it in principle, but would not have given it the emphasis that it received between 1800 and 1945. In part, because of the slowness of communications and other logistical difficulties, the military texts and narratives do not justify any effort to impute a "grand strategy," or rigorous comprehensive or total strategy for all frontiers of the empire; the lack of anything resembling a Joint Chiefs of Staff or General Staff reinforced that absence. The closest approach to any grand strategy would be the broader world view of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos in his *De Administrando Imperio*, in which there is an interlocking diplomatic and military perspective. Byzantine manuals of strategy and tactics assume a general who is responsible in a specific local situation, and who may often be cut off from contact with the capital and the emperor and who, therefore, must be expected to possess wide authority and initiative in waging war. Finally, such concepts as center of gravity, emphasized by Clausewitz, or the American one of escalation, are not present in Byzantine strategic works.

However limited these Byzantine manuals on strategy and tactics may appear to be, they have no real counterpart, to my knowledge, in medieval western Europe, where it appears that translations of the Late Roman military writer Vegetius, virtually unchanged, are the only extant formal studies of principles of warfare. One possible explanation (suggested to me by my colleague, Professor Peter Dembowski, who is a specialist on Old French literature), is that it was contrary to the prevailing values of medieval western European warriors to engage in the intellectual study of warfare. If such is the case, the Byzantine adaptation and continuation of Graeco-Roman reflections on warfare are unique. It is not surprising that in the sixteenth century various Byzantine strategic manuals such as the *Taktika* of Leo VI served as important models for the efforts of Maurice and Johann of Nassau to reorganize military tactics, formations, commands, and drills. (On this see, especially the important researches of Werner Hahlweg and Michael Roberts.) It is true that during the Renaissance there was a rediscovery of the *Ars Militaris* of Roman authors, but it is the Byzantines who preserved and adopted the ancient Greek concepts of military or strategic science as *episteme* and *strategike*.

These cases illustrate some of the difficulties which are inherent in the study of Byzantine military institutions and strategy. An appreciation of very long-range continuities is essential. Lacunae in the extant sources do not always permit one to understand the full linkage and degree of continuity. The longer and broader historical context requires comprehension. It has always been known that there are many contin-

uities of Byzantium with her Greek and Roman antecedents, but in the case of strategy, especially on Byzantium's eastern frontier, there are some greater instances of continuity than hitherto suspected. The study of Byzantine strategy, conception of military operations, stratagems, and tactics is far from complete. Its realization will depend not only on progress in Byzantine military studies, but also a more accurate understanding of Greek and Roman military thought, that indispensable fount of Byzantine military wisdom. None of these remarks intend to denigrate the distinctive Byzantine contribution to strategic and tactical thinking, but that originality cannot be grasped without reference to its Greek and Roman heritage.

## NOTES

1. *Corpus Juris Civilis, pr.*
2. *Des Byzantiner Anonymus Kriegswissenschaft* 4.2 (In *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller,* ed. H. Koechly and W. Rustow, Leipzig, 1855, 2:56). See also 6.4-6.5, 33.7-8 (58-60, 162-164 Koechly-Rustow).
3. Procopios. *Bella* 1.24.26, 2.16.7.
4. Ibid. 6.30.18.
5. Ibid 1.1.16-1.1.15.
6. Ibid. 3.15.25.
7. Hans Delbrueck, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte* (Berlin 1900) 2:399-401.
8. Procopios. *Bella* 7.8.11.
9. Ibid. 1.17.32.
10. Ibid. 6.23.29.
11. *Byz. Anon. Kriegswissenschaft* 33.7-8 (162-164 Koechly and Rustow). See. A. Pertusi, "Ordinamenti militari, guerre in Occidente e teorie de guerra dei Bizantini (secc. 6-10), Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, vol. 15, T.2 (Spoleto 1968) 631-700.
12. Procopios, *Bella* 6.27.25-29.
13. The standard edition, henceforth cited as *Strategikon,* is *Das Strategikon des Maurikios,* ed. George T. Dennis and German trans. E. Gamillscheg (Vienna, 1981), and the Dennis English trans. published by University of Pennsylvania Press.
14. *Strategikon* 8.2.4.
15. Ibid. 8.2.47.16.
16. Ibid. 8.2.80.
17. Ibid. 8.2.92.
18. Ibid. pr.

19. Ibid. 2.1.
20. Ibid. 7A, pr.
21. Ibid. 7A, pr.
22. Ibid. 8.1.7.
23. Ibid. 8.2.8. 24.
24. Ibid. 82.81.
25. Ibid. 11, pr.
26. Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Die byzantinische Realtion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (Munich, 1976). John Haldon and Hugh Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," *Zbornik Radova, Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, Vizantološki Institut* 19 (1980) 79-116.
27. Everett Lynn Wheeler, "Flavius Arrianus: A Political and Military Biography," Ph.D. diss. Duke Univ., 1977.
28. Onasander 11.3.-4 (trans. by Illinois Greek Club in: *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, 1923, 1962, 431-433).

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# [12]
# The Frontier: Barrier or Bridge?

## *Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr.*

The relatively neglected and obscure early process of the creation of the Byzantine-Arab frontier in northern Syria and upper Mesopotamia took place as part of the initial Muslim conquests. The chronological limits of this inquiry are those of the conquest of Syria and its immediate aftermath, that is, the 630s and early 640s, in particular the Caliphate of ꜤUmar I, or ꜤUmar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (634-644).[1] The Caliph ꜤUmar's relations with Byzantium have received insufficient investigation. It now seems clear that the military situation that immediately followed the decisive Byzantine defeat at the battle of the Yarmūk in August, 636, was a confused and fluid one. Heraclius energetically sought to reestablish a new secondary defense line in northern Syria. He wished his commanders to avoid major battles in the open against the Arabs, but he was willing to conceive and encourage vigorous counterattacks in order to hold or to regain strategic territory, for example, Melitene, and the vicinity of Qinnasrīn/Chalkis. He even may have sought to retake or at least to threaten Ḥimṣ/Emesa in 638. The Muslim conquests did not at first appear to be inevitable and inexorable.

It was the Byzantines who first sought and succeeded in establishing the frontier as a barrier, not a bridge; at least they intended it to be a barrier. Yet there was not, from the beginning of Byzantine-Muslim relations, any notion of a hermetically sealed frontier because it was unfeasible to create such a barrier. Eutychius provides a description of an effort to demarcate a frontier near Chalkis, however temporary.[2]

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The Byzantines and Muslims probably made a truce in 637 after the battle of the Yarmūk north of Damascus and Ḥimṣ;  it lasted until 638 in northern Syria.  It was the Byzantines who requested that truce, which established a temporary linear frontier.  It was consistent with the story of the image or ṣūra of Heraclius placed on  a pillar or ʿamūd at the truce line  near Qinnasrīn,  which presumably occurred in  the caliphate of ʿUmar.  Heraclius, because of his troubles with General Manuel in Egypt and with the governor of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia,  John Kateas,  understandably wished to maintain central  imperial control over the empire's borders.  He did not wish diplomatic relations to fall into the hands of the local authorities,  especially if they failed to  consult him about important matters.[3] In similar fashion,  by  issuing his order for local officials to hold out as long as  possible against the Muslims,  but not to attack them out on the open battlefield,  Heraclius was attempting to establish a  common policy and  guideline for local  administrators,  to prevent harmful local ad hoc arrangements with the Muslims whenever possible.[4] He did not wish special arrangements to be made with the Muslims by local governors or military commanders, but wanted them to be cleared and approved by himself.  That was also part of the process of creating a very  clear imperial authority's reach  directly to the limits  of the frontier.

Theophanes's and Agapius  of Manbij's account of  John Kateas's peace arrangements -- ἐστοίχησε  -- with the Muslims under ʿIyāḍ  in the year, presumably, of 638 (unless there is confusion with 637), show that there were efforts to develop a sequence of Byzantine withdrawals during which period barriers  were formed against  any kind of  movement.  Theophanes reports that the  Muslims agreed "Not to cross  the Euphrates,  neither peacefully nor  in a state  of war,  as long  as the Byzantines  pay the

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amount of gold." This agreement of the Muslims not to cross the Euph-
rates, for example, protected the Byzantine territories in Mesopotamia
by guarding against any pretext of transhumant movement being used to
introduce Arabs across the river.[5] But it also prevented trade, and thus
applied a certain economic, especially, commercial pressure. This was
consistent with the agreement at Baᶜlabakk mentioned by al-Balāḏurī, in
which Greeks cannot trade beyond regions that have made peace terms,
sulh, with the Muslims. These subtle commercial, transportation, and
economic pressures worked in favor of the Muslims although they also
suffered somewhat from such disruptions. There are indications that
Muslim leaders were aware of the important role of economics in the con-
quest. Azdī significantly reports that during the conquests of Pales-
tine and Syria the Muslims cut off trade, in order to apply pressure to
the Byzantine defenders.[6] These pressures contributed to the ultimate
submission of localities to the Muslims. Thus the frontier was not
always a barrier but was sometimes a bridge for economic and cultural
exchanges in the early Byzantine period.

The terms of the agreement, sulh, of Baᶜlabakk -- which appears from
its contents and terminology to be a very early agreement indeed --
involve segregating the Greeks, Rūm, in the Baᶜlabakk region from the
rest of the population. They are not to move near the city, or to leave
until approximately May, 637, or to inhabit fortified or settled places,
presumably because they might use these to entrench themselves. Of
course, if the northern border were closed to movement, that would have
required making the Greeks stationary until it was time to open it.
There could have been perils in allowing them to move, such as clashes
with tribes, disputes over food supplies, and pasturing rights while
they moved with their animals.

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The agreement made by Abū ʿUbayda at Baʿlabakk is some important con-
firmation of the agreements at  Qinnasrīn that Eutychius,  Agapius,  and
Pseudo-Wāqidī recount.   The  agreement at Baʿlabakk,  according  to the
plausible calculations of Miednikov and Caetani,   was made in late 636,
after the fall of Damascus in December, 636, and provided for the Greeks
to have the  ability to winter at  Baʿlabakk region and only  to move in
May-June 637=Rabīʿ  II and Jumādā.   These  dates are consistent  with a
date of 637 for  an agreement at Qinnasrīn made by  Abū ʿUbayda or ʿIyāḍ
b.  Ghanm with a  Byzantine patrician,  for a year's truce  at a defined
line to enable Greeks to evacuate.[7]

The evacuation  of Greeks from conquered  areas appears to  have been
handled with great care by both sides,   at a number of locations.    The
policy cleared regions  of as many unfriendly people  as possible.    The
careful  arrangements for  removal of  Greek population  were a  fitting
background to later efforts to create  a zone of devastation between the
Byzantines and Muslims.  There was a reciprocity, a symmetry, of a kind.

The duration of  the peace terms was extended  in the trans-Euphrates
Byzantine territories,  that is,  Mesopotamia  and Osrhoene,  until 639,
when the Muslims invaded on the pretext  of the Byzantine failure to pay
the stipulated tribute.  These temporary improvisations had their polit-
ical aspects; it is likely that the Muslims knew that Byzantine requests
for a truce could have had as an  ulterior motive the desire to bring up
more men  for a Byzantine  counterattack or counteroffensive.   Yet the
temporary truce lines traversed routes  that transhumant Arabs often had
used before the Muslim invasions.  Thus the frontier agreed for in Meso-
potamia was  one that  the Byzantine  authorities accepted  because they
were afraid of Arabs peacefully crossing  it and then inflicting harm on
the Byzantine forces, the authorities, and the region.

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The Ba‘labakk agreement helps to confirm that of Qinnasrīn (and of Egypt) by showing that the Muslims did permit Greeks, Rūm, to move, to have definite territorial limits. The Qinnasrīn arrangements are much less mysterious when compared with this early agreement that al-Balādurī describes, because it shows the principle of staged withdrawals and mutual concern for the welfare of those inhabitants who wish to leave. A.J. Butler was skeptical about reports of such an agreement in Egypt.[8] Butler's negative conclusions about General Manuel's agreement for Egypt now reveal themselves to be weak and untenable, given agreements in the north that did temporarily limit Muslim expansion along a fixed frontier. Yet it is uncertain why al-Balādurī and Byzantine sources failed to mention the Qinnasrīn arrangements that Eutychius, Agapius, and Pseudo-Wāqidī report.

The reference by al-Balādurī, Futūh al-Buldān, to the conquest of Bālis and Qāṣirīn by Abū ‘Ubayda, accompanied by the withdrawal of many of the Greeks there to the Byzantine Empire, Mesopotamia, and Jisr Manbij, is probably part of the same truce and withdrawal arrangement made at Qinnasrīn by Abū ‘Ubayda. Abū ‘Ubayda probably went as far as the Euphrates in 637, where he halted. This preceded any Muslim crossing of the Euphrates, as well as the peace that Theophanes states that the Byzantines made at Qinnasrīn for the protection of Byzantine Mesopotamia. The report by Balādurī on Bālis and Qāṣirīn became separated in memory from the events at Qinnasrīn.[9]

All of this is consistent with the chronology of D. Hill for the conquest of Mesopotamia in 639, following the expiration of the truce because the obligatory monetary payments were not made by the Byzantines. It does appear that there were two truces made at Qinnasrīn, and that the one to which Eutychius refers preceded the one that Theophanes,

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Michael the Syrian,   and Agapius mention.[10] Yet the  patrician who made
the truce at Qinnasrin  in 637 originally may or may  not have had Hera-
clius's permission to make such an  agreement.  The whole problem of the
eventual evolution of the Byzantine-Muslim frontier is better understood
as emerging  in part  out of the  conditions of  the conquest  and truce
arrangements made in Syria in the 630s, as well as those of Mesopotamia.

There were moments during the rapid  initial Muslim conquests when it
appeared that  the notion of any  coherent line was  disappearing.  The
frontier as a zone was frequently crossed by Arabs in the fourth through
seventh centuries.  This penetration was sometimes peaceful,  sometimes
not.  The devastation  by Heraclius in the border areas  in 637-641 was
deliberate,  for it was an effort to create a free-fire no man's land of
destruction and emptiness.  He intended to make the frontier a barrier,
not a bridge.  Most willful contact of a nonmilitary kind between Islam
and Byzantium passed  by sea,  not through the  land frontiers,  despite
occasional famous embassies,  for example,  to Baghdad  or to Damascus.
Opportunities for cultural  contacts would have accompanied  such embas-
sies,  at least potentially.  The Byzantines strove to create a defense
in depth against the Arabs.

The Muslims likewise  sought to create a frontier  against the possi-
bility of Byzantine incursions,  raids,  and espionage.[11] There was also
the danger of flight  of their own fellow Arabs,  whom  they valued very
highly and who might be non-Muslims, such as but not necessarily, Chris-
tians,  to the Byzantine Empire.  Neither  side ever succeeded in making
that frontier completely  impervious to penetration.  Many  of the cul-
tural transmissions  and influences  across frontiers  probably occurred
when border regions changed  from the control of one side  to the other.
There was a certain symmetry between  the actions of ʿUmar and Heraclius

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who both wished, at least temporarily, for the creation of a frontier along the passes of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus.

One of the essential elements in creating the new frontier with the Muslims, which ran through former Roman and Byzantine territories, was, it is clear from al-Ya'qūbī, the cutting of the passes.[12] He uses the verb qata'a, "to cut," to describe the act. That act terminated the initial stage of the Arab conquests and of the Muslim pursuit of the fleeing Byzantines. Details of this cutting do not exist, but the passes were blocked as a symbol and a reality of the creating of new limits to the authority and freedom of people to travel. The cutting of the passes is another clear example of the decision to create barriers for both military and civilian elements. Such "cutting" is also implied in the accounts of al-Balādurī and Michael the Syrian, especially concerning Heraclius' decision to create a wasteland between the two regimes.[13] Muslim spearheads were naturally the first to encounter this cutting of the passes, which was not at first part of any formal agreement.

The question of who cut the passes, and for what distance, and how they decided to do this is not clear from the sources, except that orders allegedly came from the authority of Heraclius. It was not the Muslims who first cut the passes, but a defensive measure on the part of the Byzantines, in their effort to create a viable new defensive line and mark a halt to Muslim expansion.

It was not just the creation of a no-man's land, it was the cutting of the passes that was critical from the Arabs' point of view in helping to create a frontier. Of course, Michael the Syrian's information about Heraclius' devastation of an abandoned area is also important.[14] The possible role of Roman and Byzantine experiences on the earlier frontier

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with the Sassanian Persians deserves reexamination.    These may have
affected how the Byzantines tried to create and maintain a frontier
against the Muslims Arabs.   The terrain of the old Byzantine-Sassanian
frontier was more relevant than much of that of the earlier Roman ones
with the Arabs, which did not pass through mountains.   The role of Hera-
clius' experiences in 613 and in the 620s in establishing an effective
defense against the Persians,  as well as his perspectives while operat-
ing at Antioch in the 630s, where he had much opportunity to think about
the role of the passes and the Taurus and the Amanus range, was impor-
tant.[15] The κλεισοῦραι are critical elements for the understanding of
this problem,   but it is unclear whether the Muslim thughūr were the
counterparts of the Byzantine στόμια or of the κλεισοῦραι.  It is diffi-
cult to ascertain how much of the frontier was firmly set before the
Caliphate of Harūn al-Rashīd.

   The Byzantine concept τὰ ἄκρα, or extremities, for frontier regions,
implies lands at the extremity or edge/outer edge of Byzantine control.
Yet the concept of τὰ ἄκρα does not appear to assume much about the
nature of the frontier zone as one of barrier.  The Muslim concept of
dawāhiya al-Rūm, means, according to Lane, "the exterior districts of
the Greeks."[16]  Julius Wellhausen translated it as Aussenland, but it
really means, as did the Byzantine τὰ ἄκρα, the extremities.[17]

   The sources provide little information about the actual conditions of
routes or passes through the frontier regions for the few who wanted to
or had to travel.  Heraclius wanted some kind of frontier that did not
involve massive battle engagements in the open country.  Once the forti-
fied towns of Syria had been lost, what remained of defensible posts
were located along the mountain ranges and their passes.

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The Θαύματα of St. Anastasius the Persian, which were written around the middle of the 630s, just before the Muslim conquests, indicate that the road through the Taurus had been used for travel between Palestine and Constantinople -- that is, everyone did not use sea transportation.[18] So the cutting of the passes through the mountains did affect transportation and travel for the few who wanted to travel. But there were, perhaps, always some who managed to penetrate such frontiers out of desperation. Intriguing is the position of the κλεισουροφύλαξ, whom Theophanes mentions.[19]

Cutting the passes involved geographic realities as well as the will, sense of timing, and readiness to resist. Geography alone does not explain the Muslim halt at the end of the 640s. There is one report that Heraclius assumed that Arabs could not stand cold, so he may indeed have tried to take advantage of climatic differences on the hither side of the Taurus chain. Yet such expectations had proven to be false in Syria, near Hims.[20]

Part of creating a frontier was defining subjects, and for the Muslims, that involved attempting to gain control of all Arabs, as one sees in ʿUmar's efforts to demand back Arabs who had fled to Byzantine control, or even to the Byzantine court. such as, in one spectacular case, Jabala b. al-Ayham, the last king of the Ghassanids, the former Byzantine federates.[21] The cases of individuals who crossed the frontiers appear to be relatively few. Byzantium's eastern frontier with the Persians had not been entirely clearly delimited after the end of Heraclius' war with the Persians. The problem was not so much disagreement on the frontier's location, but Byzantine concern for the internal strife within the Persian Empire. Some Byzantine military units may have been stationed in western or especially northwestern areas of the Persian

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Empire even after Heraclius's return to Byzantine territory.    According
to some Arabic sources, Muslim invaders of ᶜIrāq encountered some Byzan-
tine troops there during the invasions.[22] Thus there was a very confused
territorial control at the time of the Muslim conquests.

The terms of  the surrender of various Syrian  and Mesopotamian towns
in the 630s and  640s contributed to the creation of  a more homogeneous
population within  territorial borders.   Yet  these populations  in fact
were not homogeneous at all; they were simply more homogeneous than they
had previously been in Syria.   The campaigning probably made Anatolia
less homogeneous, because of the resettlement of certain refugees,  such
as Jabala b. al-Ayham's Ghassanids, who settled in Charsianon.

Al-Yaᶜqūbī reports that in the year 20 A.  H., the last expedition of
ᶜUmar's Caliphate took  place against Byzantine territory,   ard al-Rūm,
under Maysara b. Masrūq. He claims that this was the first expedition to
enter Byzantine territory in Asia Minor. He adds that Ḥabīb b.  Maslamah
al-Fihrī hesitated  because of fever,  and  so explained his  conduct to
ᶜUmar when he inquired about the reason for the delay.   This enraged the
Caliph:  "ᶜUmar said, whenever he spoke of the Byzantines, 'I would like
God to make the passes burning coals/embers, jumra, between us and them,
this side  [of the passes]  for us and what  is behind [the  passes] for
them.'"[23] Attribution to ᶜUmar gave this statement special significance,
because of  his great reputation.   At  the least,  this is  a revealing
characterization of the frontier that was  circulating in the late ninth
century,  in the  lifetime of al-Yaᶜqūbī.   Relations  with Byzantium in
ᶜUmar's caliphate,  after the great initial victories,  have been pretty
much ignored.   E.W.  Brooks omitted the  passage from al-Yaᶜqūbī in his
list of Arab raids.[24] Accordingly, others who subsequently wrote on sev-
enth-century Byzantine-Arab relations yet did  not read Arabic,  did not

know of it, and did not cite it.[25] The passage of al-Yaᶜqūbī expressly indicates support on the Muslim side for the creation of a frontier as a barrier at the passes. The question of its authenticity cannot be determined absolutely, for somewhat similar statements were attributed to ᶜUmar concerning mountainous barriers in Iran. The reports of ᶜUmar's diplomatic efforts to regain Arabs who had fled to Byzantine territory are consistent with his above statement trying to establish a line of demarcation between the empires.

Serious Muslim expeditions into Asia Minor resumed after the death of ᶜUmar, according to al-Yaᶜqūbī. Yet there were expeditions across the passes into Asia Minor in 644, so this tradition is erroneous. ᶜUmar's alleged statement is also a justification for the creation of a no-man's land of destruction between the two empires. This perhaps fits in with a need for consolidation.

The passage from al-Yaᶜqūbī may have an incorrect attribution. It may not have been ᶜUmar I, but ᶜUmar II (ibn ᶜAbd al-Azīz) who said something like that. There are references to ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-Azīz wishing to destroy forts between al-Maṣṣīṣa and Antioch, but the local people explained that al-Maṣṣīṣa had been created to defend Antioch, and prevent attacks on it, so he spared it.[26] This is not the same tradition or context, but there are some similarities.

Al-Yaᶜqūbī had claimed that there were no more expeditions during the Caliphate of ᶜUmar by land against Byzantium after the first one across the passes in 20 A.H. Yet this first one really, according to al-Balā-ḏurī, aimed at cutting off fleeing Arabs at the passes, which was accomplished.[27] It was not a raid deep into Anatolia. Al-Yaᶜqūbī may be reflecting views of his own time instead of that of the Caliphate of ᶜUmar (634-644).[28] There was also a potential conflict of reports about

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the Caliphate of ʿUmar because there are a number of well-attested
reports that there was an expedition in 644 across the passes, indeed to
Amorium, perhaps led by Muʿāwiya.[29] The passes are critical in the text
on ʿUmar as well as that of other Muslim historians who stress the cut-
ting of the passes as a critical act in the halting of the initial
stages of the Muslim conquests.

There is a passage in the history of Pseudo-Wāqidī on the challenge
of the passes for the Muslim invaders from the south.  It is a dubious
source, but it provides some appreciation of the formidable and differ-
ent nature of the challenge of the passes.  It contains tantalizing ref-
erences to Maysara b. Masrūq's crossing of the passes and the obstacles
and challenges that this act involved, but little credence can be placed
in details, and again, there are no dates.[30] Pseudo-Wāqidī contains sev-
eral troubling passages and is not specific about dates, which is dis-
turbing and may indeed indicate its non-historical, non-annalistic char-
acter.

Very probably fabulous is Pseudo-Wāqidī's statement that Constantine,
son of Heraclius, was sent to Palestine in order to try to save it.  The
text suggests that this happened late in the conquests.  This is a pos-
sible confusion with Theodore, the brother of Heraclius.  There is no
evidence that Constantine went there.  Yet the tradition of Constan-
tine's naval expedition is mentioned concerning the Byzantine effort to
retake Ḥimṣ by sea, so there is some possibility of credibility in this
text.[31] Pseudo-Wāqidī also claims that Heraclius returned to Constanti-
nople from Antioch, after abandoning Syria, by ship, but this contra-
dicts Nicephorus who claims that he had become terrified of water.[32]

Pseudo-Wāqidī also reports that ʿUmar wrote to Heraclius and his son
Constantine for the return of Arabs of the tribe of Iyād, which corre-

sponds to Ṭabarī's account, of ʿUmar's request for unidentified Arabs who had fled to Byzantine territory. Heraclius apparently returned these, but not other Arabs, such as the Ghassanid remnants, who had fled to Byzantine territory. This correspondence took place in A.H. 20, that is, 640/641. He asked that they return those Arabs from the tribe of Iyād who had fled to Byzantine territory or he threatened to harm - eliminate - Christians within his territory. This is a much harsher description of the demand for return of Arabs than Ibn Saʿd or Ṭabarī mention. Ibn al-Athīr also recounts the flight of part of the tribe of Iyād to Heraclius, but states that ʿUmar requested return of Arabs in return for which he would return Byzantines to the emperor.[33] The net result is that the history of Pseudo-Wāqidī is unreliable, even though it may contain some historical evidence and material. It is just too risky at this time to try to disentangle what may be true from what surely is false. Yet there was important correspondence between Heraclius and ʿUmar concerning flight of Arabs into Byzantine territory.

The Baʿlabakk agreement as well as a reference by Ṭabarī to ʿajam (Persians) indicate that there were Persians either left behind or who fled from internal strife in Persia after death of Khosro II.[34] The reference to Persians in al-Balādurī's account of terms given by Abū ʿUbayda at Baʿlabakk is obscure. These Persians in the mid 630s may have failed to join in the Persian withdrawal, or this may have been an anachronistic reference to other Persians later resettled in the Bekaa valley in the ʿUmayyad or later period.[35] This adds credence to the possibility of a role of Nikitas, son of Shahrbaraz, and possibly another son, and adds more on presence of Persians in the Mesopotamia at that confused period. Posner's analysis in her dissertation adds more credence on problem of ʿIyād b. Ghanm's pursuit of the Byzantines as far as

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Melitene.[36]  Posner's  logic  in  reaching  these  conclusions  deserves
review,  but there is evidence in favor of the probability of ᶜIyāḍ hav-
ing accomplished the conquest of Mesopotamia from Syria.

Some Muslim sources, notably Ibn al-Athīr and Ṭabarī, who use tradi-
tions that Sayf b.  ᶜUmar transmitted, raise the problem of of the popu-
lation at Ḥimṣ rising against the Muslims in favor of Heraclius.   Hera-
clius  allegedly supported  them  by persuading troops  from  Byzantine
Mesopotamia to come to their  assistance.[37] This Byzantine relief effort
for Ḥimṣ from Mesopotamia reportedly did not work because the Byzantines
pulled back on news of a Muslim threat from ᶜIrāq to their own homelands
in Mesopotamia.   The confused  situation  in  Mesopotamia and  northern
Syria adds complexity to any effort to understand the genesis of a fixed
and clear Byzantine-Muslim frontier.

Albrecht Noth  has criticized  the extreme  skepticism of  Wellhausen
about "Schools" of Muslim  tradition,   including Wellhausen's propensity
to interpret most traditions in terms  of his preconceived notions about
Muslim schools of interpretation.   Noth believes that Wellhausen's meth-
odology contained  flaws.[38] Noth's views are  relevant for the  study of
the tradition about a  revolt at Ḥimṣ in favor of  the Byzantines by the
tribe of Tanūkh and others.   Professor Shahīd has rightly called atten-
tion to this event in his excellent analysis of the later history of the
Tanūkh.[39]

A charming tradition  concerning Caliph ᶜUmar from  Ṭabarī,  probably
via Sayf b.  ᶜUmar, reports an exchange of gifts between his wife,  Umm
Kulthūm, and the Byzantine Empress, who presumably was Martina,  wife of
Heraclius.   It cannot have taken place  before 638,  when ᶜUmar married
Umm Kulthūm,  or later than the death of Heraclius in 641.   It occurred
during a respite in hostilities,  according to Ṭabarī,  after the Byzan-

tine emperor "abandoned raiding." According to the story, Umm Kulthūm sent perfume by way of an ambassador to the Byzantine Empress, who reciprocated by sending her a necklace. The incident triggered a controversy about whether· this was her personal property or that of the government. It ultimately was given to the Caliphal treasury and Umm Kulthūm received monetary compensation by ʿUmar from his personal account.[40] The incident, as well as several other anecdotes about witty and relaxed correspondence between ʿUmar and Heraclius, which Ṭabari appears to have taken from some collection of traditions about Byzantine-Muslim relations, reveal the existence of embassies at an early date between the two empires.[41] The frontier was not unbreachable but the cases also illustrate the need to keep exchanges under the strictest controls, irrespective of the importance of the persons involved.

It is significant that a tradition developed that the Byzantines and Muslims had arranged agreements from the period of their ·earliest contacts. This created the precedent for diplomatic relations in subsequent centuries, even though the existence of diplomacy did not signify the permanent disappearance of a state of warfare between the two parties.

The neglected population transfer arrangements of the agreements that the Byzantines and Muslims made at the time of the conquests, were a prelude to and a part of the larger problem of creating a frontier, or of the development of the frontier. Restricting commercial entry also reduced the possibility of espionage by those posing as merchants, and somewhat less important, could have restricted movements of weapons or other items that the other side may have needed.

The frontier was also a place for the exchange of prisoners, and hostages, and therefore was a place where outside influences could some-

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times, somehow pass the frontier.  The late tenth-century De velitatione
bellica, which is attributed to Nicephorus Phocas or his circle,  recom-
mends that merchants be sent into  territories that were adjacent to the
Byzantine borders  for the purposes  of military  espionage,  especially
concerning imminent raiding plans and routes of Muslims.[42] This informa-
tion from the late tenth century  is important,  because it reveals that
it was sufficiently common for merchants to cross from Byzantine to Mus-
lim territory that  this was a good cover for  spies.   Presumably merc-
hants at least occasionally engaged  in trade,  and commercial exchanges
may have been accompanied by other less willful exchanges,  for example,
of culture and  information about events,  conditions,  practices,  and
innovations in the other society  and its neighboring governmental enti-
ties.

   The jurist Abū  Yūsuf Yaᶜqūbī (731/2-798)  in his  Kitāb al-Kharāi is
aware  of the  potential  problem  of merchants  transmitting  espionage
across  the frontier.[43]  Abū Yūsuf  recommends-- and  this is  important
because he is  contemporary with and recommending to  Hārūn al-Rashīd in
the early ninth century-- that guards  be established on the frontier to
check merchants who crossed the frontier.  The guards were to search for
arms,  slaves,  and letters that contained espionage reports.   One should
recall the concern of Muslims that St. Willibald, when he came as a pil-
grim via Cyprus to the Holy Land,  might  be a spy.   Abū Yūsuf helps to
clarify this incident.[44] Abū Yūsuf,  then,  does not recommend any abso-
lute closure of  the frontier,  but he  is aware that there  is a danger
from merchants passing  through it.  He does not  specify any particular
frontier, for he speaks only of the problem of "polytheists" in general.
Yet his passages  have some relevance  for understanding  the Byzantine-
Arab frontier.    The precise control of  the border from  the Byzantine

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side is another subject that deserves more scholarly attention. One should exercise caution in using Abū Yūsuf because his is a general legal treatise, although he does discuss some specific regions that were formerly Byzantine or adjacent to contemporary Byzantine territories.[45]

The frontier's limits were not securely fixed, but fluctuated. Yet Abū Yūsuf and other legalists assume that it was possible to create tight controls at the borders.[46] Yet there is inadequate information about the physical demarcation of the frontier. Some Muslim sources apparently assume that there could be some trade near or at the borders, but the texts do not suggest that it was considerable.

The problem of the study of the frontiers between Byzantium and the Caliphate, Byzantium and the Arabs, requires a more careful look at the nature of arrangements during the actual conquest of Syria. This is a necessary prerequisite for any full understanding of relations, military, diplomatic, and commercial, after the scene shifts to the Taurus passes or to the problem of the defense of Byzantine Asia Minor.[47]

The frontier evolved directly out of the trends and precedents established during the Muslim conquests of Syria. Of course there had been a long history of Byzantine efforts to create a frontier with Arabs before the frontier of the late seventh to ninth centuries took its form. Even the deep Muslim penetrations of the Byzantine frontier in Asia Minor in the late seventh century and the related Byzantine inability to stop such raids at or near the borders were anticipated by the reluctance of Byzantine commanders and their soldiers to offer open resistance to the Persians during their invasion of Byzantine Syria and Mesopotamia in 540, as well as the propensity of Byzantine soldiers and commanders to seek the protection of walled towns during the Muslim conquest of Syria in the 630s.

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Matters could have  turned out differently in the wake  of the Byzan-
tine  evacuation  of  Syria.    Although a  number  of  local  governors
attempted to  make their own arrangements  with the Muslims,  no buffer
states or independent or semi-independent states emerged between the two
powers.    Neither Byzantium nor the  Muslim leadership apparently wanted
that, and Heraclius' strong leadership, even late in his life, helped to
assure that the central government  maintained some reasonable degree of
control over  its borders.    At a  later date in  Byzantine-Muslim rela-
tions,  some  buffer states  emerged,  but it  is significant  that none
emerged in the middle of the seventh century.  Indeed the devastation of
the new border areas  helped to discourage such an outcome.    Yet it is
prudent to limit  counterfactual speculation.    The fact  is that ᶜUmar,
Heraclius,  and his immediate successors  managed to assert central con-
trol over  the newly  developing frontier  between Byzantium  and Islam.
That reality  created basic  precedents even  though the  tight controls
that they envisaged remained imperfect and eventually loosened under the
influence of subsequent pressures, opportunities, and changes.

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[1] There is no intention here to repeat the valuable conclusions of H. Ahrweiler, A. Kazhdan, N. Oikonomides, and A. Pertusi, and others, Frontières et Régions Frontières du VIIe au XIIe siècle, Rapports, XIVe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines (Bucharest, 1971), II. Still fundamental is E. Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze des oströmischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071 (Brussels, 1935). See also, J. F. Haldon-H. Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands," ZVI, 19 (1980), 79-116; R.-J. Lilie, Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber (Munich, 1976). I thank the Fulbright Commission for a Fellowship in Islamic Civilization in Summer, 1984, The School of Historical Studies, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, for a Membership in 1984-1985, and the Division of Social Sciences of The University of Chicago for aid. I have learned much from discussions with L. I. Conrad, Fred M. Donner, Roy P. Mottahedeh, and most of all, Irfan Shahid.

[2] Eutychius, Annales, ed. L. Cheikho, CSCO, II (Louvain, 1909-1910), 19-20. Caetani, Annali dell' Islam III, 583-585, 799; Ps.-Wāqidī Lees II, 35-39, 43-61. Ps.-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām, I (Beirut, 1972), 114-16.

[3] Theoph., Chron., A.M. 6128 (340 De Boor); Michael the Syrian, Chronique, ed. trans. J.-B. Chabot, II (Paris, 1901), 425-426; cf. Agapius, PO, VIII, 476-478; cf. VIII, 471-72, Theoph., A.M. 6126 (338-39 De Boor), on Egyptian peace, with ⁽Amr b. al-⁽As. D. R. Hill, Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests (London: Luzac, 1971), 84-99.

[4] Michael the Syrian, Chron., Bk. 11, c. 7 (II, 424-425 Chabot).

[5] Theoph., Chron., A.M. 6128 (De Boor 340). L.I. Conrad, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercul-

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tural Transmission," unpub. paper, 2nd International Congress on Greek and Arabic Studies, Delphi, July, 1985. Agapius, PO, VIII, 476-477. D. Hill, Termination, 84-99. Transhumant movement was common in the region.

[6] Azdī, Tarīkh futūh al-Shām, ed. ʿAbd al Munʿim ʿAbd Allāh ʿĀmir (Cairo, 1970), 165. L.I. Conrad, "Al-Azdi's Futuh al-Sham: A Historical/Historiographical Assessment," unpub. paper, Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām, Amman, 1985.

[7] Theoph., A.M. 6128 (340 De Boor); Michael the Syrian, Chronique (II, 426 Chabot); Eutychius, II, 19-20 Cheikho; Agapius, PO, VIII, 476-477. Pseudo-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām I (Beirut, 1972), 114-116. Balādurī, Kitāb futūh al-Buldān (130 De Goeje). L. Caetani, Annali dell' Islam, III, 435; N.A. Miednikov, Palestina ot zavoevaniya ee arabaye I (St. Petersburg, 1902), 486-89, on chronology.

[8] A.J. Butler, The Arab Conquest of Egypt, rev. by P.M. Fraser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 207-09, 468-83. Theoph., A.M. 6126 (338 De Boor).

[9] Balādurī, Futūh (150 De Goeje). D. Hill, Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests (London: Luzac, 1971), 67, 81, 92.

[10] Theoph., A.M. 6128 (340 De Boor); Michael the Syrian, Chronique, II, 426 Chabot); Eutychius, II, 19-20 Cheikho; Agapius, PO, VIII, 476-77. Ps.-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām I (Beirut, 1972), 114-16.

[11] al-Balādurī on duties imposed on Dulūk, Raʿbān inhabitants by their Muslim conquerors: Balādurī, Futūh, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1866; r.p.), 150.

[12] al-Yaʿqūbī, Tarīkh, ed. Houtsma, II, 161. See also, Azdī, 237.

[13] Michael the Syrian, Chronique, Bk. 11, c.6-7, Chabot, II, 422, 424; Balādurī, Futūh, ed. De Goeje, 163-64. Yākūt/Wüstenfeld, I, 928. Ibn al-Athīr, II, 384, 386 Tornberg. Pseudo-Methodius, who appar-

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ently wrote in the late seventh century, emphasizes the signifi-
cance of the Muslim seizure of the "entrances of the North," i.e.,
the passes: cf. Paul J. Alexander, The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tra-
dition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 45, for
the the earliest, Syriac, version. For the Greek: Anastasios
Lolos, Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Methodios, 1. Red., XI, 13, Beiträge
zur Klassischen Philologie, Heft 83 (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag
Anton Hain, 1976), 104-05.

[14] Michael the Syrian, Chronique, Bk. 11, c.6-7 (II, 422, 424 Chabot).
On devastated area, see also, Ṭabarī, i 2396.

[15] N.H. Baynes, "The Military Operations of the Emperor Heraclius,"
United Service Magazine, N.S., 47 (1913) 30-38, 195-201. A. Stra-
tos, "La première campagne d'Héraclius contre les Perses," JÖB 28
(1979), 63-74; H. Manandian, "Marshrut'i persid́skich pochodov
imperatora Irakliy," VizVrem 3 (1950), esp. 144-46.

[16] Edward William Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon, (r.p., Beirut, 1968),
Part 5, Book I, p. 1774.

[17] J. Wellhausen, "Die Kämpfe der Araber mit den Romäern in der Zeit der
Umaijiden," Göttinger Nachrichten, Philol.-Hist. Klasse (1901),
415.

[18] Miracula S. Anastasii Persae, c. 15, ed. H. Usener (Bonn, 1894), p.
26.27-28a.

[19] Theophanes, Chron., A.M., 6159 (350 De Boor). J. Ferluga, "Le cli-
sure bizantine in Asia Minore," ZVI, 16 (1975), 9-23, r.p., Byzan-
tium on the Balkans, (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1976), 71-85; cf. F.
Hild, Das byzantinische Strassensystem in Kappadokien (Vienna,
1977).

[20] Ṭabarī, i 2390-2391 refers to Heraclius's attempt to take advantage
earlier at Ḥimṣ of the Arabs' dislike of cold. Leo VI, Tactica,

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18.124 = PG, 107, col. 976, advises that the cold bothers Arabs and therefore one should attack them in cold weather.

[21]  Balāduri, Futūh, 136-37, 163-64 De Goeje; al-Ya°qūbī, Tarīkh (II, 168 Houtsma). Al-Asma°ī, Tarīkh al °arab qabl'al-Islam, ed. Muhammad Hasan Āl-Yāsīn (Baghdad, 1959), 111-12. Al-Asma°ī's detailed knowledge of Islamic traditions: N. Abbott, Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, III: Language and Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications [Chicago, 1972]), 99-107. Tabarī, i 2508-2509. Ps.-Wāqidī, II (Beirut, 1972), 112. al-Istakhrī, ed. De Goeje, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. I, 45. Ibn al Athīr (Tornberg, II, 386, 414-15). Abū'l Fidā, Annales ed. Jo. Ja. Reiske, I (Copenhagen, 1789), 234-36. Excellent background: Irfan Shahid, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 2-4, 13-16, 18-24, 117, 382-83, 474-76, 499-500.

[22]  Tabarī, i 2474-2479; Tabarī, Chronique, trans. H. Zotenberg, III (Paris, 1871), 420. Ibn al-Athīr, II, 407-410; Al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat, XIX, 236-38. Not analyzed much by Caetani, Annali dell' Islam, III, 753-56; Nadine F. Posner, "The Muslim Conquest of Nothern Mesopotamia," unpub. Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1985, who kindly made her important thesis available; J.M. Fiey, "Tagrît: Esquisse d'une histoire chrétienne," Communautés syriaques en Iran et Irak des origines à 1552 (London: Variorum, 1979), esp. 309-11. Also, Fiey, "The Last Byzantine Campaign into Persia and Its Influence on the Attitude of the Local Populations towards the Muslim Conquerors," unpub. paper, Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām, University of Jordan, Amman, 1985; Fiey, "Les diocèses du 'maphrianat' syrien," Parole de l'Orient 5 (1974), esp. 138, 140-41. Cf. Michael the Syrian, Chron., (II, 416, 513

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Chabot).

[23] al-Ya'qūbī, Tarikh, Houtsma, II (Leiden: Brill, 1883), 178-79.

[24] E.W. Brooks. "The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources," JHS 18 (1898), 182-208, esp. 182-83; Brooks, "Additions and Corrections," JHS 19 (1899), 31-33.

[25] A. Stratos, Τὸ Βυζάντιον στὸν Ζ' αἰῶνα, (Athens, 1965-1977), 6 vols.

[26] al-Balādurī, Futūh al-Buldān, De Goeje, 165, and 167 = P. K. Hitti trans. 255-256, 258.

[27] Balādurī, Futūh, 164 De Goeje.

[28] Al-Ya'qūbī, Tarikh, II, 178-79.

[29] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, History of the Conquest of Egypt...Known as Futuh Misr (ed. C. Torrey, New Haven, 1922), 108; Ṭabarī, i 2594, 2798, Ibn al-Athīr (Tornberg, II, 444; III, 60); Balādurī, 136-37 De Goeje; Michael the Syrian, 11.8 (Chabot, II 431). For analysis: W.E. Kaegi, Jr., "The First Arab Expedition to Amorium," BMGS, 3 (1977), 19-22 = Army, Society and Religion in Byzantium, XIV.

[30] Ps.-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām, II (Beirut, 1972), 5-9. Contains some tantalizing material, but there are problems with assessing such a doubtful source.

[31] Ps.-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām I (Beirut, 1972), 245. See Irfan Shahid, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century, 455-461.

[32] Ps.-Wāqidī, Futūh al-Shām, II (Beirut, 1972), 7. Nicephorus, Hist. ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig, 1880), 26.

[33] Ps.-Wāqidī, II, 111-12 on flight of the Iyād. There is also, II, 155, reference to Istanbul. Cf. Bakrī, Mu'jam mā ista'jam (Cairo, 1945), p. 75 on 'Umar writing to Heraclius; Ṭabarī, i 2508-2509. Ibn Sa'd, Biographien, ed. E. Sachau (Leiden, 1906), vol. IV, Pt. 1, 139-40, for reference to 'Umar's successful effort to regain a captured Muslim commander by correspondence with Emperor Constan-

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tine,  son  of Heraclius.  On ⁽Umar's  efforts to try to  halt the

migration of  the Banu Taghlib  to Byzantine  territory,  Balāḏurī,

Futūḥ (181-83 De Goeje).  Ṭabarī, i 2509-11; Caetani, Annali dell'-

Islam, IV, 226-31.

³⁴ Balāḏurī, Futūḥ (130 De Goeje).  Nadine F.  Posner,  "The Muslim Con-

quest of Northern Mesopotamia," unpub.  Ph.D.  diss., New York Uni-

versity, 1985, pp.  176-81, notes on 198-200, 316-17, 371,  n.  24.

Hill, Termination, 84-99.  On ⁽ajam, Ṭabarī, i 2508;  Posner,  "The

Muslim Conquest of Northern Mesopotamia," 271.

³⁵ Balāḏurī, Futūḥ (130 De Goeje).

³⁶ Ṭabarī, i 2349; M. J.  De Goeje, Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie,

Mémoires d'histoire et de géographie orientales,  No.  2,  2nd ed.

(Paris, 1900), 134-35;  Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, III,  812,  but

cf. III, 788-789; IV, 45.  Nadine F.  Posner, "The Muslim Conquest

of Northern Mesopotamia," esp. pp. 246-92.  The situation was con-

fused in Mesopotamia,  because there apparently were some Byzantine

troops in nominally Persian territory who resisted the Muslim inva-

sion of ⁽Irāq.  This problem needs more study: Ṭabarī, i 2474-2477;

Agapius, PO, VIII, 453; Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, III, 752-753.

³⁷ Ibn al-Athīr  (Tornberg, II, 413);  Yāqūt, II, 73; Ṭabarī, i 2393-94,

i 2498-2503, 2594; Ṭabarī (Zotenberg, III, 425-430);  Ibn al-⁽Adīm,

Zubdat al-Halab min Tarīkh Halab, I, 25-29;  Balāḏurī, Futūḥ, (149

De Goeje).  See discussion by N.  Posner,  "The Muslim Conquest of

Northern Mesopotamia," esp. 246-92.

³⁸ J.  Wellhausen, Skizzen und Vorarbeiten,  VI,  83-89.  Albrecht Noth,

Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislam-

ischer Geschichtsüberlieferung (Bonn, 1973), Bd. 1.  A.  Noth, "Die

literarisch überlieferten  Verträge der Eroberungszeit  als histor-

ische Quellen  für die  Behandlung der  unterworfenen Nicht-Muslims

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durch ihre neuen Muslimischen Quellen," <u>Studien</u> <u>zum</u> <u>Minderheiten-</u> <u>problem</u> <u>im</u> <u>Islam</u>, I (Bonner Orientalische Studien, N.S., 27/1, 1973), 282-314.

[39] Irfan Shahid, <u>Byzantium</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> <u>Arabs</u> <u>in</u> <u>the</u> <u>Fourth</u> <u>Century</u>, pp. 455-461.

[40] Ṭabarī, i 2822-23. The exact date of this incident is uncertain. It may involve the aftermath of an unlikely effort to attack Hims by sea, or by a raid from Byzantine Mesopotamia, or perhaps diplomatic negotiations to smooth events after the failure of the expedition, in order to prevent the incident from creating a major outbreak of new warfare.

[41] Ṭabarī, i 2822.

[42] <u>Liber</u> <u>de</u> <u>velitatione</u> <u>bellica</u> <u>Nicephori</u> <u>Augusti</u>, ed. C. Hase, Bonn ed. (1828), 196.

[43] Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb, <u>Kitāb</u> <u>al-Kharāj</u>, (Cairo: al-Maṭba't al-Salafiyya, 1962/3), 187-190, esp. 190.

[44] Abū Yūsuf, <u>Kitāb</u> <u>al-Kharāj</u>, 190. <u>Vita</u> <u>Willibaldi</u>, MGH, <u>SS</u>, XV (Hanover, 1887), 94: nesciebant, de quale fuerant gente, sed speculatores esse illos estimabant....

[45] Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb, <u>Kitāb</u> <u>al-Kharāj</u>, 39, for discussion of former border between Byzantine and Persian Mesopotamia in the pre-Islamic era, a very detailed and generally accurate description.

[46] Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb, <u>Kitāb</u> <u>al-Kharāj</u>, 187-90.

[47] H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," <u>DOP</u>, 12 (1956), 219-33; Hugh Kennedy, "From <u>Polis</u> to <u>Madina</u>: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," <u>Past</u> <u>and</u> <u>Present</u>, No. 106 (1985), 3-27.

# [13]

## THE BALKANS IN THE NINTH CENTURY:
## BARRIER OR BRIDGE?

### D. OBOLENSKY / OXFORD

In a book published in 1956, that leading authority on Byzan-
tine-Slav relations, the late Father Francis Dvornik, had this to say:
'The destruction of Christianity in this vast region of the Roman
Empire called Illyricum, which included all the provinces ... from
the Alps to the Peloponnese - with the exception of Thrace - had
another important consequence which has never been pointed out
before ... It was ... in this region that Latin and Greek populations
were intermingled, living peacefully together and forming a bridge
between the Latin West and the Greek East. If the Christian
civilization in Illyricum had not been destroyed by the Avars and
the Slavs, the Western and Eastern Churches would, by virtue of
this "bridge", presumably have remained in contact ... Because this
bridge between the two Churches was wrecked by the new occu-
pants of Illyricum and because the Arabs gained control to a great
extent over the Mediterranean Sea, communication between East
and West became extremely difficult ... Thus Illyricum, instead of
being a bridge between West and East,... finally became the
battlefield on which the two forces of Christendom waged the first
great struggles which led to that complete separation so fateful for
the whole of Christendom and all mankind'.[1]

It is not my intention to comment at length on Dvornik's
statement, nor to discuss its obvious relevance, of which he was

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1. *The Slavs, their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956), pp.44-45.

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very much aware, to Henri Pirenne's celebrated theory about the
role, allegedly played by the Arabs, of interrupting the east-west
flow of commerce and culture across the Mediterranean. But the
main theme of the passage I have quoted is clearly of direct
relevance to the subject of my paper. Dvornik's main thrust, it is
true, is towards an earlier period - mainly the sixth and seventh
centuries. Yet it raises, in a challenging form, the whole question of
the role played by Illyricum - and Illyricum, as we shall see, means
in this context the greater part of the Balkan peninsula - in the early
medieval history of Europe. Did this region cease at that time to be
what it became after the Roman conquest of the second and first
centuries before Christ - a bridge between the eastern and the
western halves of the Empire, and later a meeting-ground between
Greek and Latin Christendom? Or did it, through the travails of the
barbarian invasions of the sixth and seventh centuries, retain
something of its connecting and mediating role? These are the two
questions I would like to consider in this paper. And I have chosen a
period which is of peculiar importance in the medieval history of
south-eastern Europe: the ninth century.

I will approach my subject from two different angles - the one
geographical, the other ideological. I shall first look at some of the
material results of the barbarian invasions, in an attempt to discover
whether the Balkan peninsula was still in the ninth century an
obstacle to east-west communications, or whether on the contrary
the trans-Balkan routes were then opened once again to regular
land traffic. In the second half of the paper I will turn to the cultural
field, and consider how far the Balkan peoples were able, in the
ninth century, to act as a bridge between the Greek and the Latin
worlds, between Eastern and Western Christendom.

There is no need today, I think, to argue that the destruction
wrought throughout the Balkans by the Slavs and Avars in the sixth
and seventh centuries was widespread and thorough. Literary and
archaeological evidence has shown that large areas of the country-
side were laid waste; the cities of the interior were sacked; the
Byzantine administrative machinery collapsed; the network of
bishoprics established since the fourth century in the principal cities

was almost wholly uprooted, and the once flourishing Christianity of this region extinguished, at least in the interior, for several centuries; whole stretches of the countryside were emptied of their inhabitants who, when they escaped the slaughter, either fled or were deported to regions north of the Danube; and in their place tribal groups of land-hungry Slavs settled all over the peninsula, from the Danube to the southern Peloponnese, and from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Virtually all the northern and central regions, north of the 40th parallel, were occupied by the Slavs; in Greece the situation was not radically different: southern and eastern Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, and the western districts of the Peloponnese, were in the course of the seventh century densely Slavicised. Only in some maritime towns - on the Adriatic and Black Sea coasts, and also in Athens, Corinth, Patras, Monemvasia - were Byzantine garrisons maintained. The two principal cities of the Empire, Constantinople and Thessalonica, stood out, it is true, as impregnable fortresses; but the latter city was all but ringed by Slavonic territory, while the Byzantines maintained, at least until the late seventh century, only a precarious hold on eastern Thrace. It is no exaggeration to say that, with the exceptions I have cited, the greater part of the Balkan peninsula was, in the seventh and eight centuries, outside the effective control of the Empire's administration.[2]

Unlike the Germanic invaders of Western Europe, the Balkan Slavs proved unable, during these early centuries, to form stable kingdoms. Practising an agricultural and pastoral economy, they lived in small rural settlements, and were grouped within a tribal society based on kinship. The Byzantines called their tribal communities *Sklaviniai*, a term popularized in the ninth century by Theophanes,[3] and more recently by Professor Ostrogorsky.[4] This

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2. The literature on this subject is enormous. A recent survey, with a useful bibliography, is M.W.Weithmann, *Die slavische Bevölkerung auf der griechischen Halbinsel* (Munich, 1978).
3. *Chronographia*, ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig, 1883; Hildesheim, 1963), i, pp.364, 430, 486.
4. G.Ostrogorsky, 'The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, xiii (1959), pp.1-21; reprinted in the same author's *Zur Byzantinischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Kleinen Schriften* (Darmstadt,

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was a term of central importance in the historical geography of the Balkans. Scattered throughout the peninsula, the *Sklaviniai* were regions occupied by the Slavs, over which the Empire had lost all effective control, but which had acquired no alternative form of centralized administration. Their status is well summarized by the medieval *Chronicle of Monemvasia*: the Peloponnesian Slavs, it states, were subject neither to the emperor of the Romans nor to anyone else.[5]

The proliferation of *Sklaviniai* through the Balkan peninsula interposed a barrier of pagan barbarism, which for more than two centuries made any movement across the Balkans extremely hazardous. This barrier was reinforced after 681 by the rise of the Bulgarian Kingdom, strongly anti-Byzantine in policy and ambition, which seems to have isolated for some considerable time the area between the lower Danube and the Balkan range from the rest of the Balkans. The spread of the *Sklaviniai* threatened to cut one of the Empire's principal land-routes in Europe - the road linking its two principal cities, Constantinople and Thessalonica. No wonder that the Byzantine government made strenuous efforts to keep it open. An early success was gained in 688 or 689 by Justinian II, who at the head of his army forced his way through the *Sklaviniai* into Thessalonica. This was clearly a major military undertaking, for which cavalry troops had to be transferred from Asia Minor: and it was no doubt as thanksgiving for his victory that the emperor gave a generous grant in the same year to the church of St. Demetrios, the patron saint of Thessalonica.[6] We may doubt whether this breakthrough had lasting effects; in the following century, in any case, the Byzantines were forced to campaign again repeatedly against the Slavs of Macedonia.

Most of this time, however, a tenuous link survived in the Balkans between the Greek and the Latin worlds. The Latin-speaking inhabitants of the peninsula, who until about 600 A.D.

1973), pp.81-84.

5. *Cronaca di Monemvasia,* ed. I.Dujčev, *Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neollenici. Testi e Monumenti* xii (Palermo, 1976), p.16.

6. Theophanes, *op.cit.,* p.364; Weithmann, *op.cit.,* p.251.

lived to the north and west of a line drawn approximately from present-day Varna to Dyrrachium, had been eliminated, deported, or driven into remote mountain areas. The one exception, we shall see, were the cities on the Dalmatian coast. In some of the Balkan towns, which escaped the ravages, however, a Latin presence was maintained through the Church. The ecclesiastical province of Illyricum, which from the mid-sixth century extended from Istria to a north-south line drawn approximately (in modern terms) from Vidin to Kavalla, and from the Sava to the southern Peloponnese, remained under the authority of the Bishop of Rome. Thessalonica, the premier see of eastern Illyricum, had since the late fourth century been a papal vicariate.[7] We know next to nothing about the life of the Christian communities in the towns of eastern Illyricum during the dark ages; it is not impossible that, owing as they did political allegiance to Byzantium and ecclesiastical obedience to Rome, they permitted some degree of symbiosis between the local representatives of the two Churches. It seems possible therefore, albeit on a very limited scale, to speak of a bridge between Greek and Latin Christianity, in a few cities of the central area of the Balkans between, say, 600 and 750.

In the last two decades of this period this bridge must have been weakened by the Iconoclast policies of the Byzantine government. It was dealt a further and decisive blow towards the middle of the eighth century - the exact date is in dispute - when the dioceses of Illyricum were, by imperial decree, transferred to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople.[8] By the year 800 the Balkans, from the viewpoint of East-West communications, must have resembled a barrier more than a bridge.

7. See L.Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques, Eglises Separées* (Paris, 1905), pp.229-279; S.L.Greenslade, 'The Illyrian churches and the Vicariate of Thessalonica,378-395', *Journal of Theological Studies*, xlvi (1945), pp.17-30.
8. See M.V.Anastos, 'The Transfer of Illyricum, Calabria, and Sicily to the Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 732-33', *Silloge bizantina in onore di S.G.Mercati: Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, ix (1957), pp.14-31. On the other hand V.Grumel has argued that the transfer took place two dedades later, between 752 and 757: 'L'annexion de l'Illyricum oriental, de la Sicile et de la Calabre au Patriarcat de Constantinople', *Recherches de science religieuse*, xl (1952), pp.191-200.

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The situation began to change at the beginning of the ninth century. In the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus I (802-11) the Peloponnesian Slavs were defeated and subdued at Patras.[9] This marked a decisive stage in the restoration of Byzantine authority in the southern part of the Balkans. Simultaneously an impetus was given to creation of imperial themes. The themes - the basic units of Byzantine provincial administration in this period - were districts in which soldiers were settled on small farms which they held on condition of hereditary military service, and whose governors exercised, under the emperor's direct control, the supreme military and civil command. the theme system, first tried out in Asia Minor, was introduced, slowly and with difficulty at first, then on an increasing scale after 800, into those areas of the Balkans where the Byzantines succeeded in establishing direct political control over the Slavs. By the late ninth century the imperial government controlled a string of themes which formed an almost continuous edging along the Balkan peninsula, from Thrace to the borders of Istria. In some of those districts, notably in Thrace and southern Macedonia, Byzantine power extended far inland. Broadly speaking, south of a line drawn from Thessalonica to Dyrrachium, the inland *Sklaviniai* by the year 900 were well on the way to being absorbed into the theme system. By contrast, the *Sklaviniai* of the interior north of this line remained - except in Thrace and southern Macedonia - beyond the reach of Byzantine administration, and during the ninth century were merged into the Slav states of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Croatia. The period of the *Sklaviniai* had come to an end.

At the same time the Byzantine authorities made strenuous efforts to convert their new Slav subjects to Christianity. Here again the ninth century was a period of rapid achievement: in his book *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle* (1926) Dvornik has shown how, in this period, the Byzantines succeeded in creating, and in some cases reconstituting, a network of bishoprics, especially in Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly and the Peloponnese. These bishop-

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9. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, c.49, ed. Gy.Moravcsik (Washington D.C., 1967), pp.228-232.

rics were directly dependent on local metropolitanates which, in their turn, owed allegiance to the patriarchate of Constantinople. Some, notably in Macedonia and Thessaly, appear to have been set up to minister specifically to local Slav communities. Many seem to have been created in the reign of Basil I who, in association with the Patriarch Photius, planned and directed the conversion of the empire's Slav subjects.[10]

Themes and bishoprics must have done much to bring order and stability to many areas of the peninsula. Whatever may have happened to the Balkan cities in the dark ages,[11] there is no doubt that the ninth century saw the beginning of a revival of urban life in the peninsula. Since the Byzantine ecclesiastical system was founded on the Empire's administrative organization, the main cities became the seats of the military and civil governors (the *strategoi*) and of the metropolitan bishops.

*Prima facie,* therefore, one would expect the political stabilisation and relative military peace which reigned in the Balkans from 815 until almost the close of the century to have led, through the extension of the network of towns and bishoprics, to the revival of routes of communication. What evidence, then, do we have for trans-Balkan traffic in the ninth century?

The answer, I fear, is precious little. There were in this period two principal roads across the Balkan peninsula, both built by the Romans. The first was the royal highway (the *tsarki put,* as the Slavs called it), linking diagonally across the Balkans Constantinople with Belgrade, via Adrianople, Philippopolis, Sofia and Niš. It was a military and commercial route linking the Bosphorus with central Europe.[12] References to it in the ninth century are scanty. In the early years of the century three of the key fortresses on this route,

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10. See F.Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1926), pp.215-281.
11. See A.P.Každan, 'Vizantiiskie goroda v VII-XI vekakh', *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya,* xxi (1954), pp.164-183; G.Ostrogorsky, 'Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* xiii (1959), pp.45-66; C.Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), pp.60-87.
12. See K.Jireček, *Die Heerstrasse von Belgrad nach Constantinopel und die Balkanpässe* (Prague, 1877).

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Sofia, Philippopolis and Adrianople, were captured by the Bulga-
rian Khan Krum; who also, in 813, destroyed a bridge spanning a
lagoon near Selymbria on the northern coast of the Sea of Marma-
ra, on the very last segment of the road. After Krum's death in 814,
peaceful conditions probably prevailed on this road for most of the
century. Are we entitled to assume that it was regularly used by
merchants and diplomats travelling between the Empire and Bul-
garia, and after 864 by Byzantine missionaries as well? Probably
yes, provided we do not necessarily imagine any very regular or
heavy traffic. The frontiers of the Bulgarian state were well
guarded, and its people and goods were unlikely to be allowed
uncontrolled passage across them: we know from the letter sent in
866 by Khan Boris of Bulgaria to Pope Nicholas I that when a slave
or a freeman crossed the state border illegally, the frontier guards
responsible were executed as a matter of course.[13] The Bulgarian
armed forces were, of course, subject to no such restrictions; and it
is interesting to read in Einhard that on two occasions, in 827 and
829, a Bulgarian navy sailed up the middle Danube to attack the
Frankish forces on the Drava:[14] which shows that the entire length
of the Balkan peninsula could be traversed along its northern
periphery in the first half of the ninth century.

The evidence of international trade along the Belgrade-Constan-
tinople highway in this period is, as far as I know, all circumstantial.
But a pointer is provided by the outbreak in 894 of a war between
Bulgaria and the Empire. The market for the sale of Bulgarian
goods, as the result of a court intrigue, was transferred by the
Byzantine government from Constantinople to Thessalonica.[15] It
seems quite possible that the decision of Symeon of Bulgaria to
retaliate by invading the Empire was due to an awareness that, with
the market now removed to Thessalonica, Bulgarian goods - corn,
hides, flax, honey - would no longer pass along the most profitable
sector of the Belgrade-Constantinople highway, and that the Bulga-

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13. *Responsa Nicolai ad consulta Bulgarorum, PL,* cxix, col.991.
14. Einhard, *Annales, MGH, SS,* i, p.216.
15. See G.I.Bratianu, 'Le commerce bulgare dans l'Empire byzantin et le mono-
    pole de l'empereur Léon VI à Thessalonique', *Sbornik Nikov: Izvestiya na
    Bŭlgarskoto Istorichesko Druzhestvo,* xvi-xviii (1940), pp.30-36.

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rian merchants would no longer journey through some of the principal cities of his realm. Like the tourists of today, they were no doubt expected to leave some of their currency in local shops and markets.

The second of our trans-Balkan roads - which followed an east-west direction, was the *Via Egnatia.*[16] It linked Constantinople with the Adriatic coast, via Thessalonica, Edessa, Ohrid and Elbasan. Its two main terminal points on what is now the coast of Albania were Apollonia and Dyrrachium. The Romans, who built it soon after their conquest of Macedonia in the second century B.C., regarded it as an extension of the *Via Appia,* which ended in Brindisi. For the Byzantines it was the most direct means of access to their outposts on the Adriatic, their possessions in South Italy, and Rome.

It will be recalled that in 688 or 689 the Emperor Justinian II forced his army across the Thracian or Macedonian *Sklaviniai* to Thessalonica.The aim of this military operation was undoubtedly to open up the section of the *Via Egnatia* which skirted the northern coast of the Aegean between Constantinople and Thessalonica. Its effects, we saw, are unlikely to have been durable, and there can be little doubt that portions of the road reverted to their lawless condition during the eighth century.

There are, to the best of my knowledge, two - possibly three - significant episodes involving the *Via Egnatia* in the ninth century. Each in its own way is instructive, and germane to the theme of my paper.

The first episode occurred during the travels of a ninth century Byzantine saint, Gregory of Dekapolis. About the year 830 he arrived by boat at Christoupolis (probably the ancient Amphipolis, by the mouth of the Strymon). Then he went ashore, intending to continue his journey by road to Thessalonica, along the *Via Egnatia.* Almost immediately he was captured by Slav bandits.

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16. See T.L.F.Tafel, *De via militari Romanorum Egnatia, qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur* (Tübingen, 1842; London, 1973); 'Via Egnatia', in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft,* v (1905), cols. 1988-1993.

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Impressed, however, by his courage in adversity, they released him
and allowed him to continue on his way. In Thessalonica Gregory
met a monk who was going to Rome. He decided to accompany
him. By far the shortest route was the land road from Thessalonica
to Dyrrachium or Apollonia, and from there by sea to one of the
ports of Apulia. However, they decided on the longer sea-route,
ignoring the sailors' warnings about Arab pirates. So they sailed,
via Corinth, to Reggio in Calabria, and from there, also by sea, to
Naples. After spending three months in Rome, he returned - via
Syracuse and Otranto - to Thessalonica.

Later in the text we are told that St. Gregory predicted a major
revolt of the Slavs (presumably near Thessalonica), and that one of
his acquaintances, a Byzantine official from Thessalonica, aban-
doned his intention to travel by land to Constantinople because of
the 'difficult and alarming' nature of the route, and embarked
instead in Maroneia. Later still, Gregory himself travelled twice
from Thessalonica to Constantinople, undoubtedly by sea.[17]

Gregory's encounter with the Slav pirates in the estuary of the
Strymon can be dated c. 831; his friend's decision to sail rather than
travel by land from Christoupolis to Constantinople must have been
taken c.837.[18] These are precious chronological pointers: and we
are entitled to conclude from this document that as late as the 830s
one of the principal roads across the Balkans - the *Via Egnatia* - was
still highly unsafe for travel, and that land traffic during this decade
between Constantinople and Thessalonica was virtually paralysed
at times. By contrast, the same document shows, communications
by sea over the eastern Mediterranean were, despite the dangers of
Arab piracy, extensive and lively.

The second ninth-century event involving the *Via Egnatia* is,
admittedly, hypothetical. In the early spring of 863 a Byzantine
embassy left Constantinople for Moravia. Its leaders, Constantine
and Methodius travelled as envoys of the emperor to the Moravian

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17. *La vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves macédoniens au IXᵉ siècle*,
ed. F.Dvornik (Paris, 1926), pp.45-75.
18. C.Mango, 'On Re-Reading the Life of St. Gregory the Decapolite', Βυζαντι-
νά, xiii (1985), p.643.

ruler. The purposes of their mission, requested by the Moravians, was to preach Christianity in the native language of the Slavs, to provide them with a Christian liturgy and Scriptures in a language close to their own vernacular, and to build, in the heart of central Europe, a Slav-speaking Church under the joint auspices of Byzantium and Rome. The Cyrillo-Methodian mission, during the first twenty years of its existence, proved to be a bridge of great efficacy and promise between Eastern and Western Christendom.

How did the missionaries travel from Constantinople to Moravia? In default of any precise statement in the sources, it is commonly believed that they took the great diagonal road through Adrianople, Philippopolis, Sofia, Niš and Belgrade, and then up the middle Danube through present-day Hungary. This view rests on two main arguments: the relative shortness and directness of the route; and later traditions, ascribing to Constantine the conversion (presumably *en route*) of the Bulgarians to Christianity. However, the traditions linking Constantine to Bulgaria are today generally recognized as spurious.[19] Moreover in 863, when the mission travelled to Moravia, relations between Byzantium and Bulgaria were strained to breaking-point. The Bulgarian ruler Boris was then an ally of the Franks, and the very next year war broke out between his country and the Empire. It is perhaps unlikely that the Byzantine missionaries would have chosen this time to travel through his realm.

In his book *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs,* published in 1970, Father Dvornik came out with a vigorous plea for the *Via Egnatia.*[20] His arguments, which I cannot rehearse here, seem to me, if not conclusive, at least convincing. He believes that Constantine and Methodius travelled along the Egnatian Way through Thessalonica to Dyrrhachium, from there took a boat to Venice, and completed the last lap of their journey across Hungary to Moravia. But whichever route we select as the embassy's most

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19. See A.-E. Tachiaos, 'L'origine de Cyrille et de Méthode: Verité et légende dans les sources slaves', *Cyrillomethodianum,* ii (1972-3), pp.122-140.
20. F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, 1970), pp.307-314.

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probable itinerary, it can scarcely be denied that, through the bridging and unifying work which Constantine and Methodius were to perform for the common benefit of Byzantium, Rome, and the Slavs, the Balkan peninsula for a brief moment in the 860s was physically and symbolically an intermediary between East and West.

The third of our episodes involving the *Via Egnatia* in this period occurred in 869 and 870. In 869 the legates of Pope Hadrian II travelled from Rome to Constantinople to attend the anti-Photian Council. The next year, the Council having ended, they left for home. The Papal librarian Anastasius, who described their journey, makes it clear that from Dyrrhachium to Constantinople and back the legates travelled along the *Via Egnatia;* and that for their homeward journey along this road the emperor gave them a military escort commanded by a *spatharius*.[21] For honour or protection? The honour, for the legates, who because of their intransigence in ecclesiastical matters were in bad standing with the emperor, was in any case a paltry one. As for protection, it availed them little in the end. At Dyrrhachium the legates took a ship bound for Ancona; but in mid-Adriatic they fell into the hands of the Narentani, fearsome Slavonic pirates, who fleeced them of everything, including the volume containing the Acts of the Council they had just attended. Louis II, the western emperor, wrote somewhat peevishly to Basil I of Byzantium, to complain that the papal legates had not been given adequate protection on their homeward journey.[22]

Barrier or bridge? On the evidence – largely ethnic and geographical – adduced so far, can we decide the status of the Balkans the ninth century? The picture to have emerged is, I would suggest, blurred and untidy. Neither of the two great Balkan thoroughfares – the Belgrade – Constantinople military road nor the *Via Egnatia* – seems to have been greatly used, except by marching armies, or was all that safe for civilian transport, at least until the middle of the

21. Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *PL*, cxxix, col.39; cf. L.Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ii (Paris, 1892), pp.180-184.
22. *Chronicon Salernitanum, MGH, SS*, iii, p.525.

century. We are still far from the time when both roads were used by Crusaders and western pilgrims on their periodic journeys to the east. Yet, as we advance in the century, traffic along these two roads seems to be increasing, and we may guess that their masters had begun to repair and maintain them with greater conviction. The relatively peaceful conditions that prevailed through much of the Balkans after the Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty of 815-816, and especially after the conversion of Bulgaria to Christianity in 864, no doubt encouraged trans-Balkan traffic.

I now come to the second part of my paper and to the question of how far, in the cultural field, the Balkan peoples acted as a bridge between Byzantium and the West. The question of course is too vast to be treated here in a comprehensive manner: so I must cut my losses and be selective. It might, however, be instructive to compare, in this respect, two areas situated at opposite ends of the Balkan peninsula, Bulgaria and Dalmatia.

It will be recalled that in the eighth century, by imperial edict, the dioceses of Illyricum were transferred from the jurisdiction of the Pope to that of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Bulgaria was only partially involved in this high-handed operation, since the greater part of its territory, between the Lower Danube and the Balkan mountains, had formed the Roman provinces of Moesia Inferior and Scythia and had never belonged to the Church of Rome. However, by the time Bulgaria was converted to Byzantine Christianity in 864, its frontiers had expanded south-westward to embrace the area of the Macedonian lakes (including Ohrid), as well as western Albania. This newly annexed region, which had formed part of the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Epirus Nova, belonged to the diocese of Illyricum. So when, in the mid-ninth century, the Papacy began its counter-offensive in the Balkans and directed its main effort to Bulgaria, it could claim that it was seeking to regain the territory which, a hundred years earlier, it had lost in so arbitrary a manner to the Church of Constantinople.

The first Pope to pursue this Balkan policy with vigour and determination was Nicholas I. His chance seemed to come in 866, when King Boris of Bulgaria, disappointed in the Greeks who,

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having baptized him, seemed unwilling to grant an adequate status
to the nascent Bulgarian church, sent for a clergy to Rome;
simultaneously he sent an embassy to the court of Louis the
German, requesting Frankish missionaries for his country. The
Pope was faster than the Frankish king: two Roman bishops were
promptly dispatched to Bulgaria, bearing the Pope's written reply
to a list of 106 questions which Boris had sent him. I cannot here
discuss in detail this remarkable document, known to its editors as
*Responsa Nicolai ad consulta Bulgarorum.*[23] It has many claims on
the medievalist's attention. It illustrates the universalist claims of
the early medieval Papacy; it casts light on the outlook and
ambitions of the Bulgarian ruler; it uncovers the roots of the conflict
between the Byzantine and the Roman Churches for the allegiance
of the Bulgarian people; it shows that Boris was fully capable of
exploiting this rivalry in order to increase the independence and
enhance the status of his own church; and it reveals that for the time
being at least the Pope understood the mentality of the Bulgarian
ruler better than the authorities in Constantinople.

One of Boris' questions which has survived embedded in Nicho-
las' reply, is worth taking up here, for it illustrates the opposing
pressures from east and west to which the Bulgarian monarch was
then subjected. He had inquired as to how many true patriarchs
there are. His intention was no doubt to sound the Pope on the
Greek theory of the pentarchy, according to which the government
of the Church is jointly vested in the five patriarchs – those of
Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Bo-
ris's next question, as to which of them ranked second after the
Bishop of Rome, was, equally obviously, designed to test the Pope's
opinion on the Byzantine claim that it was the Patriarch of
Constantinople. Nicholas' reply to both questions showed scant
regard for the Byzantine position. He admitted that there were five
patriarchs in all; but he strongly denied that Constantinople was
second among them, declaring that this city, though it called itself
'the New Rome', owed its status to political, rather than rational

23. *PL,* cxix, cols.978-1016.

considerations: 'favore principum potius quam ratione.[24]

Boris' interest in patriarchs was, of course, prompted by more than a desire to test the validity of contemporary Greek ecclesiology. It was clear that he badly wanted a patriarch for himself. Nicholas, who had not the slightest intention of granting him one, was content for the moment to side-step the issue.

By 870 Boris was back in the Byzantine fold. Disappointment with the Pope, who would not even let him appoint a primate of his choice, and a disposition to submit to Byzantine diplomatic pressure, were undoubtedly the main reasons for this second volte-face. Three years previously the Patriarch Photius, head of the Byzantine Church, had publicly denounced the Latin missionaries working in Bulgaria, describing them as 'impious and execrable men risen from the darkness of the West', and likening them to a thunderbolt, to violent hail and to a wild boar savagely trampling on the Lord's vineyard. Above all he accused them of spreading the false doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not from the Father alone, as the Nicene Creed has it, but from the Father and the Son. This dogma of the Double Procession of the Holy Spirit (the *Filioque*) Photius proceeded to denounce as downright heresy.[25]

Bulgaria's peculiar position in the 860s, simultaneously courted by the Churches of Byzantium and Rome, at once a stake and an arena for their jurisdictional and doctrinal rivalry, has highlighted two fundamental issues which were then beginning to divide the body of Christendom. These issues were the Papal primacy and the *Filioque*. As they were henceforth to dominate all discussions between the Roman and the Byzantine Churches, and are still with us today, we must look at them, however briefly. Both issues came to a head in the 860s, and were exacerbated by the clash between the two churches over Bulgaria.

The dispute over the Papal claims was essentially one between the Roman conception of the primacy of the See of Peter, as defined by Leo the Great and Gelasius, and now pressed with new vigour by Nicholas I, and the view held by the Eastern Church of

24. *Ibid.*, col.1012.
25. *PG*, cii, cols.721-741.

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the nature of ecclesiastical authority and government. Most Byzan-
tine churchmen in this period recognized that the Roman see had
primacy over all other churches and that the Pope was the first
bishop in Christendom. The nature of this primacy, which the
Byzantines never defined very precisely, was ascribed by them less
to the apostolic origin of the Roman see than to its location in the
former capital of the Roman Empire and to its virtually unble-
mished record of doctrinal orthodoxy. It was rather more than a
mere primacy of honour, and, notably in the ninth century, implied
a recognition by the Byzantines of the right of any cleric, condem-
ned by his own church  authorities, to appeal to Rome. But they
never recognized the privilege, claimed by Nicholas I, of summon-
ing any cleric to his court or re-trying in Rome cases affecting the
vital interests of the Eastern Church. Believing that a monarchical
government of the universal church is contrary both to the canons
and to tradition, the Byzantines held that doctrinal truth is express-
ed not through the mouth of a single bishop, no matter how exalted
his office, but by the entire Church, represented by its bishops
gathered in an Ecumenical Council.

The addition of the *Filioque* to the Nicene Creed, an addition
which expresses the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not from
the Father alone, but from the Father and the Son, seems to have
first been made by the Spanish church in the sixth century, as a
safeguard against the Arianism of the Visigoths. It was eagerly
adopted by Charlemagne, who used it as a weapon against the
Greeks. In Rome the *Filioque* was not accepted until the early
eleventh century, the Popes holding that, although the addition was
theologically justified, it was  not desirable to tamper with the
version of the creed that had been accepted by the whole of
Christendom.

The Byzantine Church objected to the *Filioque* on two grounds.
In the first place, any alteration to the creed had been forbidden by
the Ecumenical Councils; and nothing short of another such council
was competent to rescind this prohibition. Secondly, the *Filioque*,
in the Greek view, was theologically untrue. The Patriarch Photius,
who protested against its use by Latin missionaries in Bulgaria,

argued that it upsets the delicate and mysterious balance between unity and diversity within the Trinity. I cannot hope to summarize here this complex and technical controversy. One may suggest, perhaps, that in attempting to express the Trinitarian mystery in theological terms, the Latins and the Greeks often started from different points of view: the Latins emphasised the single essence (οὐσία, *substantia*) as the principle of unity within the Trinity, in the light of which they regarded the relations between the Three Persons; while the Greeks preferred to start from the distinction between the Three Persons (ὑποστάσεις), and to proceed from there to consider their unity of essence.

These two divisive issues – the Papal primacy and the *Filioque* – contributed much to the eventual schism between Eastern and Western Christendom. It is not my purpose to date the beginning of this schism. I will merely point out that the Slav rulers of the Balkans continued to behave, through much of the Middle Ages, as though it did not exist. Thus in the voluminous correspondence between Innocent III and the Bulgarian ruler Kaloyan, who had accepted the Pope's jurisdiction, there is not the slightest allusion to any doctrinal difference between the two Churches.[26] And of the ten members of the Orthodox Nemanja dynasty who ruled Serbia for the two centuries between 1170 and 1370, one was baptised by a Roman priest, one was crowned by a papal legate, one was indluenced by the Catholic loyalties of his French wife, one joined the Roman Church (it is true, after his abdication) and three others, without taking this final step, expressed a readiness to recognize the Pope's authority. When all allowances have been made in these various cases for political opportunism and tactful diplomacy, are we not entitled to conclude that some consciousness of a still united Christendom survived in the Balkans through much of the Middle Ages? If the answer to this question is yes, we will surely be mistaken if we seek, on the religious plane in the Balkan world of the Middle Ages, for any real barrier between East and West.

Was it any different in the second of our two Balkan areas –

26. *PL,* ccxiv, cols.825 ff., ccxv, cols.155 ff.

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Dalmatia? In the ninth century this Byzantine province, sandwiched between the limestone wall of the Dinaric Alps and the Adriatic sea, in a narrow coastal plain stretching from Istria to Montenegro, consisted merely of a few cities and some off-shore islands.[27] The countryside between the cities was occupied by the Croats, who in company with the Avars had ravaged Dalmatia in the early seventh century. The cities still held by the empire were inhabited by Latin-speaking descendants of Roman colonists. To emphasize their Italian descent, the Byzantines called them *Romani,* to distinguish them from the *Rhomaioi* (or citizens of the Byzantine Empire). Constantine Porphyrogenitus, writing in the mid-tenth century, gives a list of these imperial cities on the coast. They are, to give their modern names: Zadar, Trogir, Split, Dubrovnik, and Kotor.[28] Dalmatia in this period was of great importance to the Empire, as a stepping-stone on the route to Venice and its own possessions in South Italy. Byzantine administration was reasonably secure in the cities; within their walls *Rhomaioi* mingled freely with *Romani.*

The Byzantine presence in Dalmatia was reinforced about the year 870 when, to counter the Arab threat to the Adriatic, this motley province was reorganized into an imperial theme.[29] Geographically and culturally, the theme of Dalmatia was well placed to act as an intermediary between Byzantium and the West. It is probable that its cities owed ecclesiastical allegiance to Rome, not to Constantinople. Dvornik, a powerful protagonist of this view, has argued that Dalmatia until 751 belonged to the exarchate of Ravenna and so was never part of Illyricum.[30] Hence this region was not involved in the transfer of the dioceses of Illyricum to the church of Constantinople. The view that the theme of Dalmatia belonged in the ninth century to the western church is argued also by the leading modern Croat historian, Nada Klaić.[31]

If ninth-century Dalmatia owed political loyalty to Byzantium

27. See J.Ferluga, *L'amministrazione bizantina in Dalmazia* (Venice, 1978).
28. *De Administrando Imperio,* c. 29, ed. Moravcsik, pp.135-139.
29. See Ferluga, *op.cit.,* pp.165-190.
30. See his *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs,* pp.6-17.
31. *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* (Zagreb, 1971), pp.232-238.

and ecclesiastical allegiance to Rome, it would deserve, by this fact alone, to be reckoned a bridge between Byzantium and the West. But there is a further piece of evidence, which may help to focus the picture more sharply. In 925 there convened in Spalatum (modern Split) an ecclesiastical synod, presided over by legates of Pope John X. At the Pope's request the synod issued a decree forbidding the local use of the Slavonic liturgy, except in those districts which lacked an adequate supply of Latin-speaking priests. About 1060 another synod of Spalatum forebade the ordination of Slavs to the priesthood, unless, it specified, they have 'learned Latin letters'.[32] Whether the anti-Slav decree of 925 is genuine, or – as some scholars believe – an eleventh-century interpolation, there can be no doubt of the popularity of the Slavonic liturgy in the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia. We do not know by what channel this liturgy was brought to the Adriatic coast, whether from Macedonia, where Methodius' disciples had sought refuge in the late ninth century, or directly from Moravia. The Cyrillo-Methodian vernacular tradition, we have seen, provided a link between Eastern and Western Christendom. Its living presence in Dalmatia, at the beginning of a long history of local Glagolitic writing, is further evidence of the bridging role between Byzantium and the West played by this Balkan region in the early Middle Ages.

It seems hardly possible, at the end of this inquiry, to attempt a general conclusion. The overall picture of the ninth-century Balkans is, I think, too disparate and fragmentary. Perhaps one underlying theme has gradually emerged: a slow revival, after the turmoil of the barbarian invasions, of traffic on the roads, stability in the cities, and organized societies both in the imperial themes and in the Slav, or partly Slav, lands of the north Balkans. In many respects this recovery was a direct result of the political and cultural revival which the Byzantine Empire underwent during the ninth century. The two areas I selected for study have shown little evidence of acting as barriers to East-West communication: Bulga-

32. D.Farlati, *Illyricum sacrum*, iii (Venice, 1765), pp.93-97; F.Rački, *Documenta historiae Chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia* (Zagreb, 1877), pp.191, 195.

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ria, though a member of the Byzantine cultural commonwealth by
870, was never in this period closed to the West. Even less so was
Dalmatia, whose wide horizons and cosmopolitan culture enabled
the narrow confines of this land to become a bridge between the
Greek and the Latin worlds. Perhaps in conclusion I may hazard the
view that by the second half of the ninth century the Balkan
peninsula was becoming once more, in some of its more exposed
areas, a land of passage and inter-communication, facing, Janus-
like, Byzantium and the West.

# [14]

THE DEFENSE OF BYZANTINE ANATOLIA DURING

THE REIGN OF IRENE (780-802)

James A. Arvites

The Byzantine-Arab frontier in Anatolia was the scene of constant warfare throughout the eighth century. During the twenty-two year period (780-802) of the reigns of Irene and her son Constantine VI, Byzantium encountered domestic turmoil, religious controversies, the rise of a powerful Frankish kingdom in the West, and an increasing Arab menace in the East. With the intensification of hostilities between Byzantium and the Abbasid Caliphate, Anatolia was under continuous Arab attack. It was therefore necessary to station large concentrations of imperial troops in the Asiatic themes. Since much of Byzantine attention and manpower was directed toward Asia Minor, the empire was unable to effectively oppose Bulgar and Slavic movements in the Balkans, and powerless to enforce its influence and policies in Italy.

During the eighth century a natural frontier emerged between Byzantine Anatolia and the Arab Caliphate, running roughly along the Taurus and anti-Taurus mountain ranges. Key strategic border fortresses, such as Loulon, Adata (Hadath), Kamach and Tyana, constantly changed hands.[1] Only three major passes penetrated the Taurus and the anti-Taurus frontier. The main road into Asia Minor was through the Cilician Gates.[2] The important fortress of Loulon, situated on high and inaccessible terrain northwest of the Cilician Gates, commanded the Tarsus to Tyana highway.[3] Possession of Loulon was critical for both Byzantine and Arab. According to Ibn Khurdadbih, it was only 431 miles from Loulon to the Asiatic suburbs of Constantinople.[4] But few Arab raids ever reached the Aegean Sea coast or the Bosphorus Straits.[5] Most of the invaders, usually following the main roads, more often raided Lycaonia, Isauria and Cappadocia.[6] Some, however, occasionally penetrated further west to Amorium, Iconium and Dorylaeum.[7]

The second invasion route was from Adata, through the anti-Taurus Mountains and into Cappadocia. The Arab raiders usually marched to

Caesarea, then proceeded north and west either to Galatia and
sometimes Ancyra, or into Paphlagonia and the Black Sea ports of
Sinope and Amastris.  Adata commanded the northwest approach to
Germanicia (Mar'ash) and the pass to the important fortress of Arab-
issos and the West.[8]

The third pass used by Arab invaders was from Melitene, located
on the right bank of the Euphrates River.  From this point enemy
raiders, after moving through the anti-Taurus pass, could go in three
different directions.  One route was to march straight west to Arab-
issos, and then to Caesarea and Cappadocia;  another was to go north-
west to Sebasteia;  and the third was through the upper Euphrates
River Valley to Kamacha and Trebizond.[9]

Byzantium made no serious attempt to block the three major invasion
passes with large concentrations of troops.  Byzantine military
strategists may have feared that any effort to do so would have allowed
the enemy to easily outflank them.  Instead a "dogging tactics"
plan was adopted.  Arab raiders were allowed to enter the empire
unopposed.  Byzantine military manuals instructed imperial troops
to "shadow" enemy movement, but avoid  pitched battles with enemy
forces, especially if they are equal or larger in strength.  In
addition they advise that battles with over-extended Arab forces
deep inside the interior of Anatolia also be avoided because desp-
erate and trapped men fight harder.  Byzantine forces were instructed
to counter an invasion with ambushes, tricks, and a "scorched earth"
campaign.  Finally the manuals state that the best time to engage
the enemy is when they are returning home loaded down with loot and
booty.

In the eighth century Byzantium developed an early warning system
against Arab raids.  A series of beacons stretched across the mountain
tops of Anatolia from Loulon and Argaios on the Taurus frontier to
the imperial palace at Constantinople.  Within a few minutes the
capital could be informed of enemy incursions.  The system also gave
Byzantine provincial authorities time to evacuate civilian populations
to safety.[11]

The Arabs also organized and reinforced their northwest border
with the Byzantine Empire.  The frontier region where many of the

Muslim raids originated was called *Awasim* or "defensive" cities, which in literal Arabic means "to impede, protect, defend". The major city on that defensive line was Antioch. The *Awasim* composed an area from Antioch to the cities of Balis on the Euphrates, Manbij, and Samosata. Along its immediate border with Byzantium a line of fortresses called *thighur* ("the front teeth") was built. The important town along that line of defense was Tarsus, which was situated near the Cilician Gates, the main pass through the Taurus Mountains.[12]

During the reigns of Constantine V (741-775) and his son, Leo IV the Khazar (775-78), Byzantine arms assumed the initiative against the Arabs. Taking advantage of Arab civil wars, Constantine V led his armies through the Taurus Mountains and temporarily took possession of Germanicia, Melitene, and Theodosiopolis (Erzurum)[13] Constantine probably had no intention of permanently occupying those important fortresses. The purpose of the expeditions was to destroy staging points for raids into Asia Minor.

Byzantine armies continued their destructive raids during the reign of Leo IV. In 776 imperial troops marched past the Cilician Gates and ravaged the countryside as far as Samosata.[14] Two years later a large Byzantine force pillaged the area around Germanicia, made a successful assault on Adata, and tore down its defensive walls.[15]

The successful Byzantine raids did not go unnoticed by Caliph al-Mahdi (775-786). The able Muslim leader took personal command of the military operations on the Taurus frontier. Under the leadership of Harun al-Rashid, second son of al-Mahdi, Arab raids and counter-attacks increased.[16]

On September 8, 780, at age thirty, Leo IV died. He was succeeded by his wife Irene and their ten year old son, Constantine VI (780-797). Since Constantine was not of age, his mother served as regent. Clever, strong-minded, and ambitious, Irene could have been an effective ruler if she had properly used her talents. But she devoted herself to the restoration of images while the empire and imperial court was plagued by palace intrigues, rivalries among eunuch advisers, religious controversies, military reverses, and

power struggles with her son.[17]

Six weeks after Leo's death an unsuccessful *coup* took place
against Constantine and Irene. It appeared to be an attempt by the
iconoclasts to place the five half-brothers of Leo on the throne.
The two Caesars, Nicephorus and Christopher, and three *nobilissimi,*
Nicetas, Anthimus and Eudocimus, and many of the iconoclast nobles
and courtiers took part in the revolt. The five princes were ordained
to the priesthood and forced to administer holy sacraments during
Christmas Day (780) services in Hagia Sophia.[18]

In the following year (781) a rebellion broke out in Sicily.
The uprising was led by its governor, Elpidius. The insurrection
was not immediately dealt with owing to the urgent need of all
available troops for the current campaign in Asia Minor against the
Arabs. In 782 a Byzantine force under the command of the *patrician*
and eunuch Theodore landed in Sicily and suppressed the rebellion.
Elpidius fled to Africa where he was well received by the Arabs, who
declared him "emperor of the Romans".[19]

Meanwhile the Arabs kept the pressure on Byzantium in the East.
In 781 Abd al-Kebir led a large raid through the Adata pass and into
Asia Minor. Anticipating an invasion that year, Irene, in June,
mobilized all the troops of the Asiatic themes. How numerous the
Byzantine forces actually were is not known. Although Theophanes
states that the imperial troops numbered 100,000 and Tabari gives a
figure of 90,000,both of those statistics seems to be highly
inflated.[20]

Arab and Byzantine sources also differ on the events and descr-
iptions of the campaign. According to Theophanes the imperial
forces were not commanded by one of the veteran generals of the Asiatic
themes, but by the *sacellarius* and eunuch John. He forced the Arab
raiders to make a hasty retreat after inflicting an overwhelming
defeat on them at Melon. Tabari, however, states that a 90,000
man Byzantine army under the command of Michael Lachanodrakon, and
the Armenian, Tatzates, *strategos* of the Bucellarion theme, were
sent to the frontier to intercept the Muslim invaders. Abd al-Kebir,
probably out of fear and respect for Lachanodrakon, ordered his

troops to return home without engaging in a single battle with their
Byzantine foes.  It is said that al-Mahdi was so furious with his
commander for this action that he threatened to have his head cut off,
but instead ordered Abd al-Kebir imprisoned.  And that was done only
after friends of Abd al-Kebir mediated on his behalf.[21]

One can conclude from those accounts that the Byzantines, employing
a large contingent of troops, were not only able to stop the Arabs, but
probably defeated them at Melon.  Ramsay locates Melon either in
or near one of the Κλεισοῦρα (passes) through the Taurus Mountains.[22]
The Arabs, using standard military tactics, entered and exited Asia
Minor by different passes in order to escape Byzantine ambush.[23]

The question of who actually commanded the successful Byzantine
operation must also be considered.  It is possible, as some have
suggested, that Irene appointed a loyal court official to lead the
army because she did not trust the pro-iconoclast generals appointed
by Constantine V and Leo IV.[24]  Her actions may have been the first
step in replacing them with military leaders who either supported
or were sympathetic to her iconodule policies.  Although it is not
clear who actually led the Byzantine army, John was probably commander
in name only, and Michael Lachanodrakon and Tatzates made all imp-
ortant strategy decisions.  It is not difficult to understand Arab
fear of Michael Lachanodrakon because of his previous military
exploits.  Whether Lachanodrakon took part in that campaign is not
known with certainty, but any large scale Byzantine military expedition
probably would have included his presence.  And Arab sources believed
that they had been defeated by Michael Lachanodrakon and Tatzates, and
not the *sacellarius* John.

In 782 Caliph al-Mahdi ordered a major offensive into Anatolia.
Taking advantage of Byzantine internal problems caused by the
revolt of Elpidius in Sicily, the treason of Tatzates, and poor
leadership in Constantinople, the Arabs avoided what could have been
a major military disaster, and instead enjoyed the immense success
on most battlefronts.

Harun al-Rashid, on instructions from his father, al-Mahdi,
organized a large expedition said to have numbered 95,793.[25]  The
Arabs marched past the Cilician Gates and seized Magida, a fortress

on the frontier located about twenty miles from Loulon.[26]  Harun
and his army then advanced west into the Opsikion theme to the town
of Nacolia.[27]  At this juncture Harun divided his army into three
parts.  One force under the command of al-Rabi-ibn-Yunus laid siege
to Nacolia.[28]  Another column of 30,000 men led by Jahya-ibn-Chalid-
ibn-Barnak moved toward the Thracesion theme.[29]  The *strategos* of
that province, Michael Lachanodrakon, intercepted the raiders at
Darenon,[30] located on the border of the Opsikion and Thracesion
themes.[31]  A bloody engagement ensued in which Lachanodrakon was
defeated, suffering heavy casualties.[32]  The third contingent and
probably the main force of the expedition under the personal command
of Harun al-Rashid, moved toward Constantinople.  Nicetas, count of
the Opsikion theme, attempted to block the Arab advance.[33]  Tabari
gives a vivid narrative of the battle that ensued.  He states:

> And the horsemen of Nicetas, Count of Counts
> (count of the Opsikion theme) met him (Harun):
> and Yazid, son of Mazyad, went out against him.
> And Yazid waited for a time and then fell upon
> Nicetas unawares; and Yazid smote him until he
> was routed.  And the Romans were put to flight,
> and Yazid took possession of their camp.[34]

The road to Constantinople was now open.  No Byzantine army stood
between Harun al-Rashid and the capital.  Irene ordered her last
reserve, the imperial *tagmata*, into action.  The force under the
command of the *domesticus* Antonius, crossed the Bosphorus into Asia
Minor, and established a defensive position on Lake Banes and in the
mountainous region east of Nicomedia.[35]  At that same time a Byzantine
force, probably that of Tatzates and the troops of the Bucellarion
theme, moved up behind the Arabs.[36]  Harun and his army were now
trapped in the narrow Sangarius river valley with all escape routes
blocked.[37]

At this point it is not exactly clear what happened.  Secret
negotiations probably took place between Harun al-Rashid and Tatzates.
The Arab leader won Tatzates over to his side.  According to Theo-
phanes, Tatzates, supposedly jealous of the influence and power
which the eunuch and *logothete* of the drome  Stauracius held over
Irene, and possessing a personal dislike for him, defected with most
of his troops to the Arab side where they were richly rewarded for
their actions.  But there may be other reasons for Tatzates, who

had a brilliant twenty-two year military career, to commit treason.
The Armenian historian Ghevond states that Tatzanes defected
because he lost favor at the imperial court and had been demoted.
The explanation of Ghevond seems more logical. Irene was in the
process of purging the high command of the Asiatic themes. In 781
the *sacellarius* John was in charge of Byzantine operations and the
next year the *logothete* Stauracius held the same position. Irene's
actions probably provoked Tatzates to desert to the Arab side.[38]

Prior to his actual defection Tatzates proposed a plan to
further weaken the Byzantine position. It called for Harun-al-
Rashid to ask for peace negotiations. Tatzates, whose treasonous
activities were unknown to his colleagues at that time, probably
urged them to honor Harun's request. Three emissaries, Stauracius,
the *domesticus* Antonius, and the *magister* Peter,went to Harun's camp
with proposals of peace. Foolishly the Byzantine delegates had not
taken any precautions, such as exchange of hostages, so upon their
arrival at the Arab camp they were seized and imprisoned.[39]

Immediately after the Byzantine officials were arrested Tatzates
and his Bucellarion troops defected, and the leaderless *tagmata*
units withdrew from their defensive positions. The road to the
capital was again open. The treasonable conduct of Tatzates now
made it possible for Harun and his forces to advance unopposed to
Chrysopolis, situated on the Bosporus Straits opposite Constantinople.[40]

Irene wisely recognized that with her armies defeated and in
disarray, her generals in enemy captivity, and manpower in Asia Minor
greatly reduced because of the Sicilian expedition of Theodore against
Elpidius, it would be very difficult to dislodge the Arabs from Anatolia.
Although Theophanes, contrary to Arabic sources, states that it was
Harun who first made this latest peace overture, one cannot help
but question that because of the precarious situation the Byzantine
Empire was in at that particular time. By the terms of the agree-
ment all prisoners, including the three Byzantine emissaries, were
released, and a three-year truce was declared. In return Constant-
inople was obligated to pay an annual tribute of 90,000 dinars, and
to give the Arabs 10,000 silk garments. In addition the Byzantines
also agreed to provide the Arabs with guides, provisions, and access
to markets during their withdrawal from Asia Minor.[41]

The truce, however, lasted only thirty-two months.[42] According to Tabari the Byzantines broke the peace.[43] But Ibn Wadhih narrates that the Arabs ruptured the pact, probably as early as 783, when al-Fadhl, son of Saloh, made a raid into imperial territory.[44] In 784 Yazid led a successful summer raid, returning with much booty.[45] In the following year (785) Ma'yuf led a force through the pass of al-Rahib and advanced to the town of Ushna.[46] In that same year the Byzantines counter attacked. They captured and destroyed Adata, whose inhabitants and garrison had abandoned the city before the assault.[47]

In September 786 Harun al-Rashid ascended the throne of the Abbasid Caliphate. Although his reign, which lasted until 808, was one of military successes against Byzantine arms, Harun did not pursue an entirely offensive policy. He began a massive program to fortify the frontier. Between 786 and 787 the cities of Adata and Tarsus were refortified. In the case of Tarsus, not only was the city rebuilt, but a large colony of Muslims were resettled there. About that same time the fortresses of Kafarbayya and Massisa were constructed. Anazarba was later fortified in 796 and in 799 the fortress of Haruniya, located a few miles southewest of Germanicia, was rebuilt.[48]

Byzantium meanwhile was preoccupied with the iconoclastic contro- vesy and a dynastic struggle between Irene and Constantine. In August 786 the Seventh Ecumenical Council convened at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople for the purpose of restoring image worship in the empire. But the day after the initial meeting had begun, soldiers of the imperial guard (*scholarii* and *excubitores*), burst into the church and threatened to kill all those present if the council did not immediately disband. Violence was prevented only when the iconoclast bishops, shouting "we have conquered", intervened and defused a highly explosive situation. Because of these cir- cumstances the empress had no choice but to dissolve the council.[49]

Irene probably realized that iconoclast military opposition had to be neutralized before a council could be successfully convened. On the pretext of an impending military campaign agains the Arabs, the empress in September 786 ordered the mutinous imperial garrison of Constantinople to be ferried across the Bosporus Straits to Asia

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Minor.[50]   There at an army base at Malagina in the Opsikion theme[51]
the troops were ordered to lay down their weapons and disband.[52]
The imperial guard, deprived of their officers, obeyed this command.[53]
The empress then ordered regiments from Thrace and Bithynia to
Constantinople and entrusted them with defense of the city.[54]   The
Bithynian forces were mostly Slavs and probably did not hold strong
views of the iconoclastic issue.[55]   The imperial troops who had
disrupted the council were an elite unit recruited by Constantine V
to garrison the capital.[56]   The disbanding of such a force no doubt
weakened the defenses of the empire.[57]   The purging of the imperial
guard and their officers must have had a negative effect on Byzantium's
army as a whole.  But since recent events had shown that loyalty
of the palace guard was essential in order for Irene to carry out her
religious designs, the empress thought it necessary to form a new
garrison for Constantinople.

An open struggle for sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire developed
in 790 between Irene and her son.  In that year, after an unsuccessful
attempt by Constantine to seize control, Irene decreed that her name
would be placed first on all official government documents.  Further-
more she ordered all imperial troops to take an oath of loyalty to
her stating "so long as you shall live we will never recognize your
son as emperor".  The garrison at Constantinople and all the troops
of the Asiatic and European themes, except the Armeniacs, took the
oath.  But the soldiers of the Armeniac theme, led by Alexius Musele,
refused to take the oath, and instead proclaimed Constantine sole
emperor.  The other themes, who had recently taken an oath of loyalty
to Irene, now reversed themselves, chose new generals, and declared
their allegiance to  Constantine.  The troops of the Asiatic themes
met at Atroa in October 790 where they removed Irene as co-ruler of
the empire.[58]

Meanwhile the Arabs, taking advantage of Byzantine internal
dissension, inflicted considerable damage to the empire.  Oriental
sources report an increase in annual border raids.[59]   Some of these
incursions penetrated deep into Anatolia, a few possibly reaching
the Aegean Sea.[60]   Attempts by Constantinople to counter attacks
were futile.  In 789 imperial forces, including tagmatic units from
the capital, were routed at Kopidnados in the mountains of Isauria

in which both Byzantine commanders were killed.[61]

In 790 a large Arab fleet from Syria attacked Cyprus. The raid must have been destructive because a Byzantine armada, composed of naval units from Cibyraeot theme and an armament from the Aegean islands, co-ordinated their operations in an attempt to intercept and destroy the Arab flotilla. The two opposing fleets finally met in battle at the Bay of Attalia in which Theophilus, *strategos* of the Cibyraeot theme, was taken prisoner. It is said that Harun al-Rashid promised to grant Theophilus his life if he would renounce his faith and convert to Islam. But the brave and devoted Theophilus refused and in turn was executed.[62]

An Arab account, however, states that the naval expedition was directed at Crete and not Cyprus. Tabari probably got Crete (Ikritish) confused with Ikita, headquarters of the *strategos* of the Chaldian theme, in northeast Asia Minor. He says that the summer raid was hampered by extreme cold weather in which many men lost hands and feet from frostbite. The description of frigid summer temperatures eliminates Crete but not Chaldian theme. Tabari probably confused Crete with a winter raid into Chaldia in which 4000 arabs suffered from frostbitten feet. It can be concluded from these accounts that the Arabs made a winter raid into Chaldian theme in either 791 or 792 in which a great number of casualties were sustained from nature and the environment rather than from the Byzantine army.[63]

In October 791 Constantine granted his mother's petition and allowed her to return to the imperial court. He restored the title of empress to Irene and again allowed her to participate actively in the government. The Armeniac theme, however, objected to Irene's return to power. Alexius Musele, *strategos* of that theme, was summoned to Constantinople where he was flogged, tonsured, imprisoned and later deprived of his eyesight. The troops of the Armeniac theme retaliated by blinding Alexius' successor, Theodore Camilianus. The emperor responded to this by sending an army to subdue the rebellious Armeniac troops. But the insurgents defeated the imperial forces in November 792 and blinded their two generals. In Spring 793 Constantine took the field himself and easily defeated the rebels. The victory was ensured when the Armenian auxiliaries, after being promised large rewards

by Constantine, deserted their Armeniac allies. But the emperor
never fulfilled his promises to them. The Armenian auxiliaries
responded by abandoning the fortress of Kamacha to the Arabs.[65]

The Arabs took advantage of Byzantine internal disorders and
continued to make their annual raids into Anatolia. In 793 they
captured two fortress-towns in separate campaigns. Aided by the
rebellion in the Armeniac theme, one of the Arab columns captured
the unprotected fort of Kamacha while the other Muslim force under
the command of Abd al-Rahman marched throught the Tarsus pass and into
Cappadocia where they captured Thebasa.[66] It is reported that 400
of Thebasa's defenders died of thirst before it surrendered.[67] In
794 the rebel Elpidius, former governor of Sicily, accompanied an
Arab expedition that reached the Black Sea coastal town of Amisus.[68]
The following summer a Muslim raiding party appeared before the
Cappadocian town of Hagios Procopius (Ürgüp).[69] And in 796 an Arab
expeditionary force penetrated Asia Minor as far as Amorium.[70] But
this raid was probably not successful for there is no indication
that any town or prisoners were captured.

The Byzantines also conducted offensive operations during this
period. In 795 Constantine personally led an expedition against
the Arabs. Although this campaign did not achieve any concrete
results, the emperor did defeat his Muslim foes at Anusan.[71]

In 797 Constantine launched his third expediton against the
Arabs. But the campaign of the emperor was doomed from the beginning
owing to treachery. Stauracius, who regularly accompanied Constantine
on his campaigns, observed that the young emperor and his elite
20,000 man army were confident in victory. Recognizing that it was
essential that Constantine not initiate any military operation
that might be successful, Stauracius bribed the advance units of the
imperial army to send back false reports that the enemy had with-
drawn from Anatolia. Upon receiving this news the easily deceived
emperor abandoned the campaign and returned to the capital.[72]

Irene decided that the time was now right to overthrow her son.
The emperor was seized and imprisoned at the imperial palace at
Constantinople. On August 15, 797, she ordered her son blinded. The
first woman to rule Byzantium in her own right, Irene was now sole

ruler of the empire.[73]

In 797, with Byzantium preoccupied with dynastic struggles, the Arabs intensified their raids. Harun al-Rashid captured the border fortress of Safsaf while one of his lieutenants, Abd al-Malik, and his force penetrated into the Bucellarion theme to Ancyra. Although the Arabs failed to capture that city, they did seize Ancyra's subterranean granary.[74]

The following year (798) abd al-Malik ravaged depopulated sections of Cappadocia and Galatia. Irene, recognizing the seriousness of the Arab raids, attempted to negotiate a truce. She sent Dorotheos, abbot of Chrysopolis and the *cartophylax* (χαρτοφύλακα)Constantine to the Muslim leader with proposals of peace. But her overtures were unsuccessful.[75]

In 799 a major Arab expedition penetrated deep into Asia Minor. Once inside the empire they divided into two groups. The main force led by Abd al-Malik advanced westward against the imperial studfarm at Malagina where they captured horses of the *logothete* Stauracius. The second column under Abd al-Rahman first crushed the forces of Paul, count of the Opsikion theme, then moved southwest as far as Ephesus. Both invasion forces returned home safely with much spoil and booty.[76]

Fortunately for Byzantium the Arabs were not able to follow up their success the next year. A Khazar invasion from the north forced Harun to end hostilities and accept a peace proposal made by Irene. The terms of the agreement provided for a truce of four years during which time Constantinople was to pay an annual tribute to the Arabs.[77]

Although a peace appears to have been concluded between Constantinople and the Abbasid Caliphate, minor Arab raids continued. Ibn Wadhih reports yearly Arab incursions into Anatolia. And Michael the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus narrate that a Byzantine counterattack took place in 800. In that year Irene's chief minister, Aetius, led the Anatolic and Opsikion themes to victory. But the next year it is reported that Aetius was defeated. It should be noted that Theophanes is silent regarding these campaigns. And Tabari states that it was Irene's successor, Nicephorus, who broke the peace by discontinuing

the payment of tribute.[78]

In 802 Irene was overthrown, ending an on-and-off reign of twenty-two years. The question arises whether Byzantine military defense systems in Anatolia deteriorated during this period or did they pass a very severe test from Arab onslaughts. The Arab threat to Asia Minor grew dramatically with the revival of Muslim power under the able leadership of al-Mahdi and Harun al-Rashid. The time of Irene's reign was the beginning of a new Arab thrust in the Mediterranean world that would continue through the ninth century. Irene's successors were unable to contain Muslim aggression. The Arabs seized Crete (826), initiated the first step in the eventual conquest of Sicily (827), and sacked Thessalonica, the second city of the empire in 904.

It would be unfair to say that Irene's policies and tactics toward the Arabs failed. Although there were minor Arab successes, the imperial defenses remained intact. During those very difficult times Byzantium suffered no major territorial losses. Using both diplomatic and military means, including the payment of tribute, Irene was not only able to contain the powerful Arab forces of Harun al-Rashid, but was successful in holding Byzantium possessions in Anatolia.

*NOTES*

1.  *Arnold Toynbee,* Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World,
    *(London 1973), p.108.*

2.  *W. M. Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor *(London
    1890), pp.77, 186, 216, 330n, 339, 343, 351, 449; Anthony R.
    Santoro, "Byzantium and the Arabs during the Isaurian Period
    717-802 A.D". (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers Universiry 1978),
    p.200; Toynbee,* Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World,
    *p.108.*

3.  *Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, *pp.342-343.*

4.  *G. Le Strange,* The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate *(Cambridge
    1905), pp.134-135.*

5.  *Hélène Ahrweiler, "L'Asie Mineure et les invasions arabs (VII-
    IX siecles)",* Revue Historique *227 (1962), 10.*

6.  *Ibid.*

7.  *Theophanes,* Chronographia, *A.M. 6259, 6271, ed. C. de Boor
    (Hildesheim 1980) 1:351,452.*

8.  *Ahrweiler, "L"Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes", p.9; J.
    G. C. Anderson, "The Road-System of Eastern Asia Minor",*
    Journal of Hellenic Studies *17 (1897), 27-28; Toynbee,*
    Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World, *p. 109.*

9.  *Ibid.*

10. *Anonymous* Περὶ Παραδρομῆς Πολέμων *in Leonis Diaconis*
    Historiae, *ed. C. B. Hass (Bonn 1828) pp. 192-193; Leo VI*
    Tactica, PG *107: 932, 933, 956, 977; Toynbee,* Constantine
    Porphyrogenitus and his World, *pp.109-111.*

11. *Cedrenus,* Chronographia, *ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1838-1839) 2:274;
    Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, *pp. 352-353.*

12. *E. A. Belyaev,* Arabs, Islam and the Caliphate in the Early
    Middle Ages, *trans. Adolph Gourevitch (New York 1969), pp.225-226.*

13. *Al Baladhuri,* The Origins of the Islamic State, *Vol. 1, trans.*

*Philip Khuri Hitti (New York 1916), pp. 294-295. Hereafter*
*referred to as al-Baladhuri.* *Nicephorus,* Opuscula Historica,
*ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig) 1880), p. 62; Theophanes, A. M. 6237,*
*6243, de Boor 1:422, 427.*

14. *Ghevond,* Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des Arabes
    en Arménie,' *trans. V. Chahazarian (Paris 1856), p. 150. Hereafte:*
    *referred to as Ghevond.*

15. *Al-Tabari, A.H. 161,162, trans. in E. W. Brooks, "The Byzantines*
    *and Arabs at the time of the Early Abbasids",* English Historical
    Review *15 (1900), 735. Hereafter referred to as Tabari.* *Theophai*
    *A. M. 6270, de Boor 1:451.*

16. *Tabari and Ibn Wadhih report increased summer raids in 779 and*
    *780. See Tabari, A. H. 163, pp. 736-737; Ibn Wadhih, A. H.*
    *163, trans. in Brooks, Hereafter referred to as Ibn Wadhih.*

17. *M. V. Anastos, "Iconoclasm and Imperial Rule 717-842", in* The
    Cambridge Medieval History, *Vol. 4,* The Byzantine Empire and Its
    Neighbours, *ed. J. M. Hussey (Cambridge 1966), p. 82; Theophanes*
    *A. M. 6273, de Boor 1:454.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Theophanes, A. M. 6273, 6274, de Boor 1:454-456.*

20. *Tabari, A. H. 164, p. 737; Theophanes, A. M. 6273, de Boor 1:455*

21. *Michael the Syrian,* Chronique de Michael le Syrien, *Vol. 3,*
    *trans. J. B. Chabot (Paris 1904), p.2. Hereafter referred to as*
    *Michael the Syrian. Tabari, A. H. 164, p.737; Theophanes, A. M.*
    *6273, de Boor, 1:455.*

22. *Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, *p.335.*

23. *E. Honigmann,* Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363
    bis 1070 *(Brussels 1935), pp. 85-86.*

24. *Lawrence A. Tritle, "Tatzates' Flight and the Byzantine-Arab*
    *Peace Treaty of 782",* Byzantion: Revue Internationale des Études
    Byzantines *47 (-977), 288.*

25. *Tabari, A. H. 164, pp. 737-738; Theophanes. A. M. 6274, de Boor*
    *1:456.*

26. *E. W. Brooks, "The Byzantines and Arabs at the time of the Early Abbasids", p.737, n. 83;  Tabari, A. H. 165, p. 737.*

27. *Tabari, A. H. 165, p. 737;  Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, *p. 139.*

32. *According to Theophanes, Michael Lachanodrakon suffered 15,000 casualties at Darenon.  Michael the Syrian, however, places Byzantine losses at a lower figure of 10,000.  See Michael the Syrian, p. 2;  Theophanes, A. M. 6274, ed Boor L:456.*

33. *Tabari, A. H. 164, p.737.*

34. *Ibid., A. H. 164, p. 738.*

35. *Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

36. *Tritle, "Tatzates' Flight and the Byzantine-Arab Peace Treaty of 782", pp. 292-293.*

37. *Michael the Syrian, p. 2.*

38. *M. Canard, "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the Eleventh Century", CMH, p. 706;  Ghevond, p. 153; Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456;  Tritle, "Tatzates' Flight and the Byzantine-Arab Peace Treaty of 782", p. 293, n. 47.*

39. *Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

40. *Tabari, A. H. 165, p.738; Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

41. *Kitab al'Uyun, A. H. 165, trans. in Brooks, "The Byzantines and Arabs at the Time of the Early Abbasids", p. 739;  Tabari A. H. 165, p. 738;  Theophanes, A. M. 6274, de Boor 1:456.*

42. *Tabari, A. H. 168, p. 739.*

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibn Wadhih, A. H. 167, n. 739.*

45. *Tabari, A. H. 168, pp. 739-740.*

46. *Ibid.*

47. *al-Baladhuri, pp. 297-298;  Michael the Syrian, p. 2;  Tabari,*
    *A. H. 169, p. 740.*

48. *al-Baladhuri, p. 298;  Canard, "Byzantium and the Muslim World*
    *to the Middle of the Eleventh Century", p. 706;  Tabari, A. H.*
    *170, p. 740.*

49. *Giovanni Domenico Mansi, ed.* Sacrorum concilorum nova et amplissim
    collecto *(Paris 1900-1927) 12:990-991.*

50. *Theophanes, A. M. 6279, de Boor 1:462.*

51. *Malagina was the first important post on the main road to the*
    *East.  Troops usually gathered there for campaigns against the*
    *Arabs.  See Ramsay,* The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, *pp.*
    *202-203.*

52. *Theophanes, A. M. 6279, de Boor 1:462.*

53. *Romilly Jenkins, Byzantium:  The Imperial Centuries A. D. 610-*
    *1071 (New York 1966), p. 94;  Theophanes, A. M. 6279, de Boor*
    *1:462.*

54. *Jenkins,* Byzantium:  The Imperial Centuries,*p. 94;  George*
    *Ostrogorsky,* History of the Byzantium State, *trans. Joan Hussey*
    *(New Brunswick 1969), p. 178;  Theophanes, A. M. 6279, de Boor*
    *1:462.*

55. *Jenkins,* Byzantium:  The Imperial Centuries, *p. 93.*

56, *Jenkins, Byzantium:  The Imperial Centuries, 93;  Ostrogorsky,*
    History of the Byzantine State, *p. 178.*

57. *Jenkins,* Byzantium:  The Imperial Centuries, *p. 94.*

58. *Theophanes, A. M. 6283, de Boor 1:466-467.*

59. *Michael the Syrian, p. 8;  Tabari, A. H. 170, 171, 172, p. 740;*
    *Ibn Wadhih, A. H. 171, 172, 173, p. 740.*

60. *Bar-Hebraeus,* The Chronography of Abul Faraj Gregory, *ed. and*
    *trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (London 1932), p. 120.  Hereafter*
    *referred to as Bar-Hebraeus.  Michael the Syrian, p. 8.*

61. *Theophanes, A. M. 6281, de Boor 1:463.*

62. Ibid., A. M. 6282, de Boor 1:465.

63. Tabari, A. H. 175, 178, pp. 740-741.

64. Theophanes, A. M. 6284, de Boor 1:468.

65. Ibid., A. M. 6284, 6285, de Boor 1:468-469.

66. Michael the Syrian, p. 8; Tabari, A. H. 176, p. 740; Theophanes,
    A. M. 6285, 6286, de Boor 1:469.

67. Michael the Syrian, pp. 8-9.

68. Michael the Syrian, p. 9; Tabari, A. H. 178, p. 741.

69. Canard, "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the
    Eleventh Century", p. 707.

70. Theophanes may have confused this raid with an Arab assault on
    Ancyra in 797. See Tabari, A. H. 175, p. 740; Theophanes, A. M.
    6288, de Boor 1:470.

71. Theophanes, A. M. 6287, de Boor 1:469.

72. Ibid., A. M. 6289, de Boor 1:471.

73. Ibid., A. M. 6289, 6290, de Boor 1:472-473.

74. Tabari, A. H. 180, p. 741; Ibn Wadhih, A. H. 181, p. 741.

75. Theophanes, A. M. 6290, de Boor 1:473.

76. Tabari, A. H. 182, p.741; Theophanes, A.M. 6291, de Boor 1:473.

77. J. B. Bury, A History of the Later Roman Empire: From Arcadius
    to Irene, 395 A.D. to 800 A.D., Vol.2 (Amsterdam 1966), p.492;
    Canard, "Byzantium and the Muslim World to the Middle of the Eleventh
    Century", p.707; Tabari, A.H. 187, pp. 742-743.

78. Bar-Hebraeus, The Chronography of Abul Faraj Gregory ed. and trans.
    E.A.Wallis Budge (London 1932), p.120; Michael the Syrian, p.12;
    Tabari,A.H. 187, p.743; Ibn Wadhih, A.H.185,186,187,p.742.
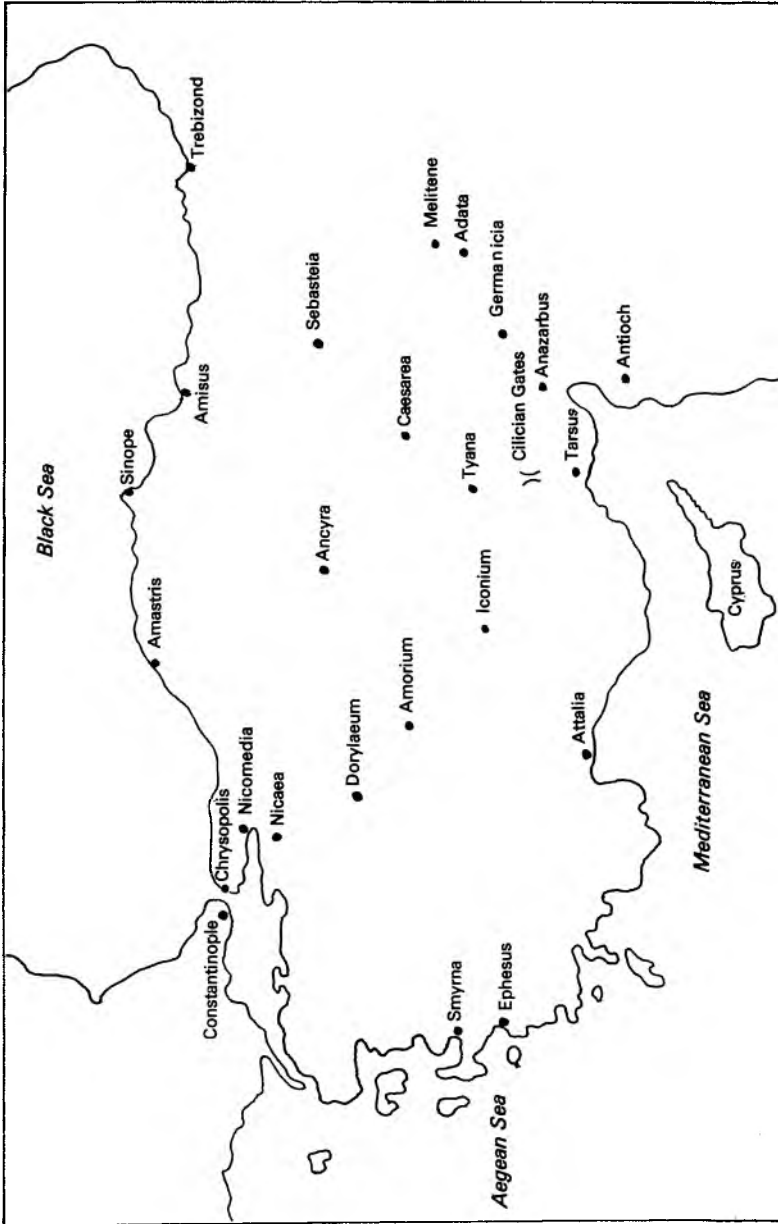
14.1  Asia Minor

# [15]

## INFANTRY VERSUS CAVALRY :
## THE BYZANTINE RESPONSE

Eric McGEER

The Byzantines encountered many different nations on the battlefield during their long history. The surveys of foreign peoples in the military manuals amply illustrate the Byzantines' readiness not only to analyze the tactics and characteristics of their enemies, but also even to learn from them when necessary[1]. Their recognition of the need to study and to adapt themselves to the unfamiliar methods of warfare practised by their enemies pays witness to the intellectual and practical character of the Byzantine approach to war[2].

The recorded observation of enemy skills and tactics was a feature which the Byzantines added to the long tradition of military science inherited from classical Antiquity[3]. The study of war was energetically renewed in tenth-century Byzantium, as the number of important manuscripts and texts dating from this period clearly demonstrates. This renewal of military science was largely in response to the increasing danger from the Arabs, whom the Byzantines had come to consider their most formidable

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1. Cf. Book XI of the *Strategikon* of Maurice (ca. 600), entitled Περὶ τῶν ἑκάστου ἔθνους ἐθῶν τε καὶ τάξεων, and Constitutio XVIII in the *Tactica* of Leo VI (ca. 900) : Περὶ μελέτης διαφόρων ἐθνικῶν τε καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῶν παρατάξεων.

2. Cf. the remarks of A.D.H. BIVAR on the Byzantine reaction to the skills, equipment and tactics of their eastern enemies in the early period at the conclusion to his article Cavalry Equipment and Tactics on the Euphrates Frontier, *DOP* 25, 1972, p. 273-291.

3. For a review of classical and Byzantine military writings, see A. DAIN, Les stratégistes byzantins, *TM* 2, 1967, p. 317-393.

enemies[4]. It is always a difficult problem to determine what relation there was between traditional theory and contemporary practice in the Byzantine military texts — to what extent did the tenth-century strategists combine theory with practice to create formations and tactics which would be effective against the Arabs ?

The analysis of the battle formation and tactics prescribed for infantry in the *Praecepta militaria*[5] (ca. 965) sheds interesting light on this question. The choice of this subject will provide the opportunity to examine the underestimated role and importance of infantry in Byzantine armies of the period, as well as to see how the author of the *Praecepta* relied on earlier sources and his own observations to develop a formation and set of tactics for Byzantine infantry facing Arab cavalry.

The attribution of the *Praecepta* to the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas is doubtful, but it can be said that the author, whoever he may have been, was an experienced soldier who wrote the treatise for the use of expeditionary armies fighting the Arabs beyond the eastern frontiers of the empire. The question concerning the sources which he used in combination with his direct experience leads to a general and to a specific answer. The general answer is that he shows a good grasp of technical terms, which in turn presupposes a reasonable acquaintance with the classical or Byzantine tacticians who had used or defined these terms. He does not hesitate to use such terminology to clarify certain points in his exposition of infantry deployment and tactics, and these instances will be noted where relevant in the discussion below.

The specific answer is that the author of the *Praecepta* drew the basic design and principle of his infantry formation and tactics directly from the model outlined in chapter XLVII of the *Sylloge Tacticorum* (ca. 950)[6]. This

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4. G. Dagron has studied the Byzantine reaction to the Arab danger from the time of Leo VI to the accession of Nikephoros II Phokas in : Byzance et le modèle islamique au xᵉ siècle à propos des *Constitutions Tactiques* de l'empereur Léon VI, *Acad. des Inscr. et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus*, 1983, p. 219-243, and *Le Traité sur la guérilla de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris 1986, p. 139-160.

5. Στρατηγικὴ ἔκθεσις καὶ σύνταξις Νικηφόρου δεσπότου, ed. J.A. Kulakovsky, *Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, VIII, 9, St. Petersburg 1908 : Text, p. 1-21, commentary and index, p. 23-58.

6. *Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim Inedita Leonis Tactica dicebatur*, ed. A. Dain, Paris 1938. Dain dated this work to the middle of the tenth century, which must be right, since there are references in the *Sylloge* to κατάφρακτοι and μεναυλάτοι, types of soldiers mentioned only after 950 or so in other military or historical sources. R. Vári, who had previously argued for an earlier date for the work, approximately 904, made a review of the contents and sources of the *Sylloge* : Die sogenannten *Inedita Tactica Leonis*, *BZ* 27, 1927, p. 241-270.

chapter, dealing with the deployment and tactics for combined armies of infantry and cavalry, gives instructions that the infantry should be arrayed in a large hollow square (called an ἰσόπλευρος τετράγωνος παράταξις)[7]. The square allowed intervals (διαλείμματα) in all four sides, thus enabling the cavalry to ride through into or out of the formation. The idea of a square formation was nothing new, of course, since Greek and Roman armies had used such a formation for marching, for encampments, or in an emergency, especially when threatened from any direction by enemy cavalry[8]. Other tenth-century treatises show that the Byzantines also used a square for the same purposes, but the *Sylloge* is the first text in which a square is prescribed as the standard battle formation for Byzantine infantry. According to this text, one employed the infantry square to act as a mobile base for cavalry, either to follow in support of a successful cavalry attack on the enemy or to offer an immediate place of refuge in case the cavalry met with defeat[9]. The author of the *Praecepta* followed the *Sylloge* closely as the blueprint for the basic deployment and tactics for infantry supporting cavalry in battle, occasionally even quoting his main source[10]. But at the same time, it must be said that he read the *Sylloge* critically and realistically, leaving aside all of its painstaking calculations of the manpower in

7. *Sylloge* XLVII.1-5. The chapter is entitled Παρατάξεις στρατοῦ συμμίκτου κατ' αὐτούς [sc. Ῥωμαίους], ἔνθα καὶ πλεῖον ἀεὶ τὸ πεζικόν. The chapter is introduced by the compiler's interesting remarks that what follow are Byzantine tactics as opposed to those of classical armies already covered previously in the work : Τοῦ δὲ στρατοῦ συμμίκτου τυγχάνοντος, ἐκ πεζῶν δηλονότι καὶ ἱππέων, τρόπον ἕτερον τὰς παρατάξεις ποιοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι, καὶ οὐ καθ' ἕνα δήπου τῶν εἰρημένων ἔν τε πεζικαῖς ἔν τε ἱππικαῖς παρατάξεσιν.

8. Cf. Xenophon's famous description of the Greek infantry marching in a square formation (*Anabasis* III.4.19-23). The Spartan king Agesilaus also put his infantry in a square while on the march (*Hellenica* IV.3.4) or when threatened by the Persian cavalry (Diodorus Siculus XIV.80).

9. *Sylloge* XLVII.19 : Ἄρχονται μὲν οὖν οἱ ἱππεῖς τῆς μάχης πρῶτοι... καὶ τρεψάμενοι μὲν τοὺς πολεμίους διώκουσι ἀνὰ κράτος, τὰς πεζικὰς κατόπιν ἑπομένας ἔχοντες τάξεις, ἡττηθέντες δὲ πρὸς ταύτας ἐπαναστρέφουσιν αὖθις..., διὰ τῶν διαλειμμάτων χωροῦντες ἐντὸς τῶν πεζικῶν ἑστήκασι τάξεων... Cf. the Byzantines' use of infantry in a square to protect the cavalry in encampments : *Praecepta*, chap. V, Περὶ ἀπλήκτου ; *De Re Militari* (ed. G.T. DENNIS in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, Washington 1985, p. 245-335), chaps. I-VI. For the protection of cavalry while on the march : *De Re Mil.*, chap. XX ; *Tactica* of Nikephoros Ouranos, chap. LXIV (ed. J.-A. DE FOUCAULT, Douze chapitres inédits de la *Tactique* de Nicéphore Ouranos, *TM* 5, 1973, p. 281-312).

10. Cf. the following passages on the construction of the heavy μοναύλιον (*Syll.* μεναύλιον) : *Sylloge* XXXVIII.3 : Τὰ μέντοι μεναύλια μὴ ἀπὸ πελεκητῶν ἔστωσαν ξύλων, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ νεακίων δρυῶν ἢ κρανειῶν ἢ τῶν λεγομένων ἀρτζηκιδίων... *Praecepta*, p. 4, 11-13 : Τὰ δὲ μοναύλια αὐτῶν μὴ εἶναι ἀπὸ πελεκητῶν ξύλων ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ νεακίων δρυῶν ἢ κρανιῶν ἢ τῶν λεγομένων ἀτζηκιδίων.

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the infantry force or of the measurements of the infantry square. In selecting only material which he knew conformed with the types of soldier and equipment at his disposal, the author of the *Praecepta* sought to give an up-to-date account of the Byzantine army[11]. The real departure from the *Sylloge*, however, begins with his systematic description of the infantry force and the situations which it might have to confront on the battlefield.

The first and second chapters of the *Praecepta* treat the numbers, equipment, deployment and tactics for the infantry force attending the cavalry. The infantry were divided into twelve ταξιαρχίαι of one thousand men each[12]. A single ταξιαρχία included four types of infantryman in the following quantities : four hundred ὁπλῖται (heavy infantrymen, armed with spear and sword, and protected by corslet, cap and shield), three hundred τοξόται (archers, « called ψιλοί by the ancients »), two hundred ἀκοντισταί and σφενδοβολισταί (light spearmen and slingers), and one hundred μοναυλάτοι (heavy infantrymen who carried an exceptionally thick and solid spear, the μοναύλιον)[13]. The author informs us that the heavy infantrymen were to be picked out from both Byzantines and Armenians (who formed a particularly ferocious contingent in the armies of Nikephoros Phokas), while the lighter ἀκοντισταί were supplied by « Russians » (ʿΡῶς) or by other foreigners[14].

The following description of the infantry square will be understood more easily with reference to the accompanying diagram. The author first instructs that the infantry be deployed in a « double-ribbed » (τετράγωνος

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11. Cf. the following passages on the equipment of the infantrymen and where the author of the *Praecepta* begins his list : *Sylloge* XXXVIII.4 : Πρὸς τούτοις λωρίκια φορείτωσαν ἢ καὶ κλιβάνια καὶ ταῦτα ἢ σιδηρᾶ ἢ κεράτινα, *τούτων δὲ μὴ ὄντων*, καβάδια ἐχέτωσαν μετὰ βαμβάκης καὶ κουκουλίου μέχρι γονάτων φθάνοντα, τὰ μανίκια μέχρι τῶν ἀγκώνων ἔχοντα σχίσματά τε περὶ τὰς ὠλένας πρὸς τὸ ἐκεῖθεν ἐκβάλλειν τὰς χεῖρας. κρατείσθω δὲ τὰ μανίκια διὰ κομποθηλύκων τῶν ὤμων ὄπισθεν ; *Praecepta*, p. 1, 16-20 : ὀφείλουσιν δὲ ἐπιταγῆναι καὶ καβάδια κοντὰ μέχρι τῶν γονάτων διήκοντα ἔχοντα δὲ βαμβάκιν καὶ κουκοῦλιν. τὰ δὲ μανίκια αὐτῶν εἶναι κοντὰ καὶ πλατέα ἔχοντα εἰς τὰς μασχάλας σχίσματα πρὸς τὸ ῥαδίως ὁμοῦ καὶ εὐκόλως τὰς αὐτῶν χεῖρας ἐκβάλλειν καὶ μάχεσθαι. τὰ δὲ μανίκια αὐτῶν ὄπισθεν εἰς τοὺς ὤμους ὑπὸ κομποθελητκίων κρατεῖσθαι.

12. *Praecepta*, p. 3, 8-15. This thousand-strong ταξιαρχία was the standard infantry unit in the Byzantine army in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries. Cf. the very similar organization of the infantry force in the closely contemporary *De Re Militari*, chapter VI, Περὶ τῶν δώδεκα ταξιαρχιῶν. For all other references to the ταξιαρχία in this period, see N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXᵉ et Xᵉ siècles*, Paris 1972, p. 335-36 and notes 280-83.

13. For a review of the Byzantine panoply in the early and middle periods, see J.F. HALDON, Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the sixth to the tenth Centuries, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1, 1975, p. 11-47. I have made a separate study of the terms μοναύλιον and μοναυλάτος in *Δίπτυχα* 4, 1986, p. 53-57.

14. *Praecepta*, p. 1, 3-4 : Πρέπον ἄρα καὶ ὀφειλόμενόν ἐστιν ἀπό τε ʿΡωμαίων καὶ Ἀρμενίων στρατιώτας ἐκλέξασθαι ἄνδρας ὁπλίτας... ; p. 2, 24 : ... εἰ μὲν εἰσὶν ἀκοντισταί, εἴτε ʿΡῶς εἴτε ἕτεροι ἐθνικοί...

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διττή, « called a τετράπλευρος by the ancients »), with three ταξιαρχίαι on each of the four sides[15]. What exactly he means by « double-ribbed » becomes clear when he presents the battle order of the infantrymen in each ταξιαρχία. They stood one hundred men broad and seven men deep, that is, two lines of ὁπλῖται in front of three lines of τοξόται, backed in turn by two lines of ὁπλῖται, thus creating what the author calls an ἀμφίστομος παρά-ταξις, « a double-faced formation »[16]. Such a deployment ensured that the rear lines of ὁπλῖται could protect their comrades' backs by turning around to face any enemy who had managed to break into the square. Each line of one hundred men was commanded by a ἑκατόνταρχος standing in the middle, while two πεντηκόνταρχοι stood on the right and left wings of the line[17].

Intervals (χωρία) were allowed between the ταξιαρχίαι to permit twelve to fifteen cavalrymen at a time to ride through into or out of the square[18]. Twelve such intervals could be created in the square, but if the enemy infantry far outnumbered the Byzantine, then the corners of the square could be closed off and only eight intervals would remain, two in each of the four sides of the square[19]. It was the duty of the ἀκοντισταί, standing behind the ταξιαρχίαι to which they belonged, to watch over the intervals and rush forward to block them off whenever the enemy attacked[20].

The square offered the Byzantines important advantages as a battle formation in enemy lands. Facing four ways, it could not be outflanked or attacked from behind, always an urgent consideration when dealing with the Arabs. In providing immediate refuge for defeated cavalry, it prevented mass and prolonged flight which was usually the makings of real disaster for an army far from home. Furthermore, the author tells us that during battle the wounded and the exhausted could find shelter inside the square, while extra infantrymen could be assigned to bring water to the combatants to relieve their thirst, or stones and arrows to the slingers and archers so as to avoid these soldiers having to leave their places in search of more

15. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 14-17, where καβαλαρικῶν must be omitted as a gloss. Among the classical tacticians who discuss the τετράπλευρος παράταξις are Asklepiodotos (XI.6) and Aelian (XXXVII.8-9).
16. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 33-35 ; p. 3, 9-14. According to the classical tacticians, the ἀμφίστομος formation placed file-leaders on the front and back ends of a file of men, with the provision that the file-leaders in the back would turn around to face any enemy attacking from behind, thus making a battle on two fronts (ἀμφίστομον ποιεῖσθαι τὴν μάχην, Onasander XXI.2). Cf. Asklepiodotos (III.5) and Aelian (XIII.1-2). The Byzantines also used the same rationale in their cavalry formations as the author of the *Strategikon* explains (II.4).
17. *Praecepta*, p. 1, 9-11. Cf. *Sylloge* XLV.12.
18. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 17-19.
19. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 22-23.
20. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 19-31.

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ammunition[21]. Many of these factors suggest strongly that the author was well aware of the psychological advantages inherent in such a formation, not least the enhanced sense of collective security among men who know that their sides and backs are protected, that they can be saved if wounded and relieved if overcome with thirst or exhaustion. It must not be overlooked, either, that a square facing four ways prevents easy flight by its very shape. For men about to face an all-out cavalry charge on their position, the lack of alternatives was probably the only reason why many of them decided to stay and fight when they would much rather have run away. Deployed as we have seen them, how were the Byzantine infantry to join battle with the enemy ?

Infantry versus infantry encounters are treated very briefly. If the enemy were not very sophisticated and simply attacked in a broad line, the ἀκοντισταί and the μοναυλᾶτοι on the two flanks of the square not directly engaged were to pour out round the enemy's flanks in a semi-circular movement and crush their line between them[22]. If the enemy infantry were also deployed in a square (as Leo tells us the Arabs often were[23]), then the ἀκοντισταί and the μοναυλᾶτοι inside the Byzantine square were sent to the aid of their comrades on whichever side of the square the enemy had attacked[24]. These very sparse directions indicate that the author considered a purely infantry battle to be very unlikely, and, as a result, was far more occupied with infantry versus cavalry confrontations — both how to resist enemy cavalry with his infantry and how to destroy enemy infantry with his own cavalry, spearheaded by the mighty κατάφρακτοι.

It was when the enemy had defeated or scattered the Byzantine cavalry and intended to follow up on their success with an assault on the remaining force that the Byzantine infantry came into their own. The Arab cavalry posed two problems which the infantry square was designed to counter. The first problem was that of their light skirmishers (to whom our author refers as Ἀραβῖται[25]), who were mounted on very swift horses and used their great speed to ride round the square in hopes of luring the Byzantines into breaking ranks, whereupon they would suddenly wheel about to catch them off guard[26]. But if these skirmishers were left at a distance or ignored, their

21. *Praecepta*, p. 3, 18-20 ; p. 4, 31 - p. 5, 2.

22. *Praecepta*, p. 4, 21-23.

23. *Tactica* XVIII.118 : Τετράγωνον δὲ καὶ ἐπιμήκη ποιοῦνται τὴν οἰκείαν παράταξιν...

24. *Praecepta*, p. 4, 23-26.

25. *Praecepta*, p. 8, 8. The Ἀραβῖται were probably Bedouin from the interior of the Arabian peninsula, whom the Byzantines appear to have considered distinct from the Arabs of Palestine or Syria. Cf. Leo, *Tactica* XVIII.110 : Σαρακηνοὶ μὲν οὖν Ἄραβές εἰσι τὸ γένος, παρὰ τὴν εἴσοδον τῆς Εὐδαίμονος Ἀραβίας ποτὲ κείμενον. τῷ χρόνῳ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν Συρίαν καὶ Παλαιστίνην διασπαρέν...

26. *Praecepta*, p. 8, 8-14.

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effectiveness was much reduced, since they would never dare close with a strongly defended infantry formation, nor could they surprise the Byzantines with attacks from the flanks or rear. For their part, the Byzantines had no hopes of coming to grips with the elusive Arab raiders and thus could only remain in formation, undeceived by their enemies' feigned attacks and withdrawals.

The second problem was posed by the more intimidating Arab regular cavalry, or even, as it appears, by their heavy cavalry, to whom the task fell to make a direct attack on the Byzantine infantry[27]. As it became clear which side of the square the enemy planned to attack in strength, the Byzantines bolstered their lines accordingly. The two πεντηκόνταρχοι (one on the left wing of the line, the other on the right) in one of the two rear lines of ὁπλῖται led their fifty men forward through the intervals into the front lines of their ταξιαρχία, making them three deep in ὁπλῖται. At this point, the one hundred μοναυλάτοι in the ταξιαρχία also came forward through the intervals into the front lines, now four deep[28]. This manoeuvre, taught to the soldiers in training, not only provided for the prompt reinforcement of the front lines where necessary, but also served to deceive the enemy as to the real depth of the front lines which they were about to attack. As I interpret the *Praecepta*, it would appear that the ὁπλῖται and the μοναυλάτοι anchored the butt ends of their spears against the ground and aimed the points at an angle into the chests of the enemy warhorses, creating, in effect, a « chevaux de frise » four men deep. The exceptionally thick and solid μοναύλιον was designed to withstand the impact of an enemy armoured cavalry charge, for as the author says, « even if the three-deep spears of the ὁπλῖται are smashed by the enemy κατάφρακτοι, then the μοναυλάτοι, being firmly set, stand their ground bravely, receiving the charge of the κατάφρακτοι and turn them away »[29]. Once embroiled with the ὁπλῖται and μοναυλάτοι in front of them, the enemy cavalrymen were then set upon by the ἀκοντισταί who circled in from the flanks of the square not under attack[30]. These light and thus more agile soldiers could take advantage of the restricted mobility of the enemy cavalrymen engaged at close quarters and pick them off one by one by striking them from behind or from their unprotected right sides.

27. Cf. *Praecepta*, p. 3, 27-34, where the author expresses his concern that the enemy might well attack his infantry formation with heavy cavalry : ... ἴσως ἐὰν οἱ ἐχθροὶ... βουληθῶσιν... καὶ παρασκευάσαι καταφράκτους καβαλαρίους ὥστε καὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἵππους αὐτῶν ὑπὸ καταφράκτων ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ τηρεῖν... Leo (*Tactica* XVIII.115)) tells us that the Arab cavalry was just as well-equipped as the Byzantines were.

28. *Praecepta*, p. 3, 37 - p. 4, 7. This manoeuvre is sketched out in the diagram of the infantry square.

29. *Praecepta*, p. 4, 7-10.

30. *Praecepta*, p. 4, 16-18.

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THE BYZANTINE INFANTRY SQUARE



ταξιαρχία     χωρίον
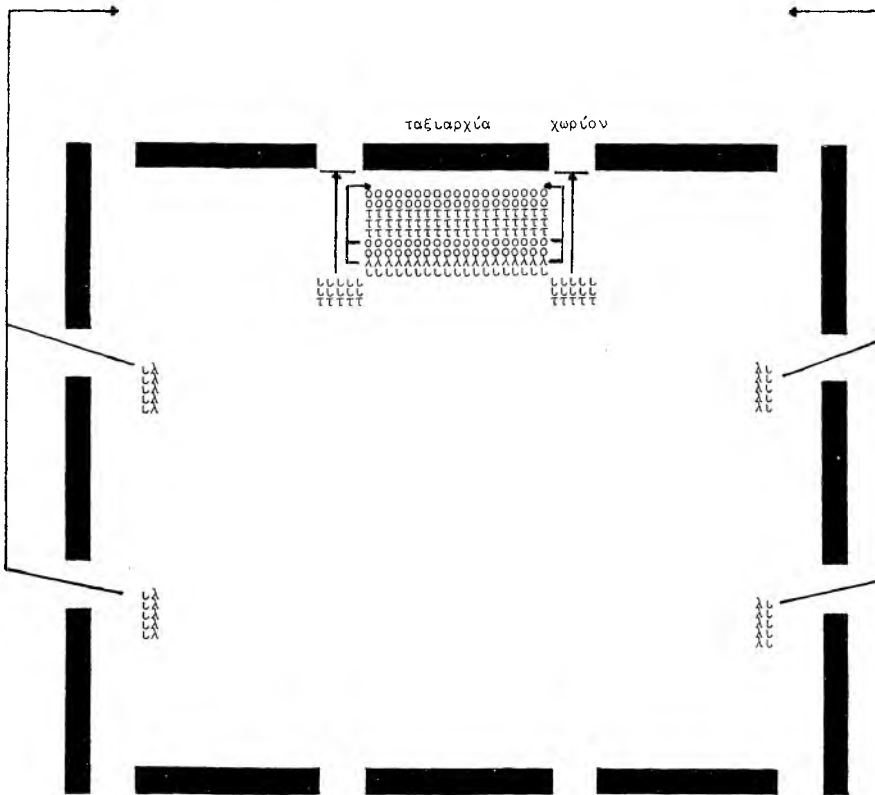
o = ὁπλίτης
τ = τοξότης
ι = ἀκοντιστής/ σφενδοβολιστής
λ = μοναυλάτος

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THE TACTICA OF NIKEPHOROS OURANOS

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o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o
o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o
x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x
x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x
x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x  x
o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o
o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o  o
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o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o   o
```

The Arab cavalry ran up against this thicket of spears after riding through a hail of arrows launched by the nine hundred archers stationed behind the spearmen on any one side of the square. If indeed the ὁπλῖται and the μοναυλάτοι were crouched over their fixed spears, the archers would have been able to shoot over their heads all the more easily, even to within very short range as the enemy drew near. Most unfortunately, our author does not give any details as to how archers stood, how they were commanded, or what their rate of shot was expected to be in battle. But their close cooperation with spearmen in repulsing enemy cavalry must have been judged indispensable if one takes into account the vast number of arrows the army was instructed to have on hand. Each archer carried one hundred arrows himself and received fifty more from the store of arrows carried by the pack-animals in the army's baggage train[31]. This plentiful supply was doubtless intended to guarantee that the archers would not run out of arrows during battle, and we have already seen that extra men were

31. *Praecepta*, p. 2, 8-9, instructing each archer to carry one hundred arrows of his own, and p. 4, 27-34, in a passage where the author refers to the arrows supplied to the archers by the army (called βασιλικαὶ σαγίται). The term βασιλικαί refers to the equipment gathered by imperial requisition as opposed to what each soldier was expected to supply on his own. Cf. the *De Cerimoniis* (p. 657) : Ἰστέον ὅτι ἐδέξατο ὁ στρατηγὸς Θεσσαλονίκης τοῦ καμεῖν σαγίτας χιλιάδας σ΄...

detailed to keep up a steady supply to them during the fighting. It seems clear enough from this evidence that the Byzantine generals wanted a constant and efficient performance from their archers to take a heavy toll on the enemy cavalrymen well before they reached the infantry lines[32].

Such, then, was the system developed and presented by the author of the *Praecepta* in order to satisfy the defensive requirements of Byzantine expeditionary armies. He adapted a simple, symmetrical formation outlined in an earlier source to the types of infantrymen in his army, and gave each type of infantrymen one specific task to perform in this defensive system. The formation and tactics which he developed were intended to solve two main difficulties for Byzantine infantry facing Arab cavalry — the swift attacks and counterattacks of the light skirmishers and the concentrated attacks of the regular or heavy cavalry. But as long as the Byzantine infantry could force the Arabs to fight on their terms, by making them attack from directly in front against a concentrated and reinforced defence, then the chances of success were probably very good.

Later Byzantine strategists were not averse to making what changes were necessary to maintain the shifting balance between infantry and cavalry on the battlefield. Thirty years or so after the *Praecepta* was written, a second version of this work was written and included in the *Tactica* of Nikephoros Ouranos[33]. Here we find a slight, but telling, adjustment in the system by which the Byzantine infantrymen deepened their lines before receiving the enemy charge. Instead of advancing one of the two rear lines of ὁπλῖται through the intervals into the front ranks; as we saw in the original *Praecepta*, the second version of this work by Nikephoros Ouranos (the victor at Spercheios in 996) instructs every second file of men in the ταξιαρχία to step sideways into the file beside it, thus making a file of men seven deep into a file of men fourteen deep[34]. It will be observed from the diagram of this manoeuvre that the width of the ταξιαρχία is reduced by one file only. This adjustment was probably intended to secure two further advantages over the earlier system — that the Byzantine infantry could make their formation even deeper than before and that they could do so in less time. It is therefore tempting to conclude from this adjustment that as

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32. Leo strongly recommended the use of archery against the Arab cavalry, especially in the initial stages of their attack. Cf. *Tactica* XVIII.130, 135-136.

33. I am preparing an edition and translation of this section of the *Tactica* of Nikephoros Ouranos (f. 109-123 of the *Monacensis gr.* 452) to accompany a new edition of the *Praecepta militaria*. For a survey of the manuscripts, contents and sources of the *Tactica*, see A. DAIN, *La Tactique de Nicéphore Ouranos*, Paris 1937.

34. *Monacensis gr.* 452, f. 110ᵛ : τότε δὲ ἁρμόζει μίσγειν καὶ τοὺς δύο ὀρδίνους τῶν πεζῶν καὶ ποιεῖν αὐτοὺς ἕνα, οἷον εἰς ὄρδινος ἵνα ἐμβῇ εἰς τὸν ἄλλον καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄνδρες ἵνα γένωνται δεκατέσσαρες καὶ πυκνώσωσι τὴν παραταγήν.

heavy cavalry came into greater use (as did the Byzantine κατάφρακτοι in the armies of Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes) the infantry were constantly obliged to find the means to stop them, resorting to deeper and deeper formations and to specialised soldiers such as the μοναυλᾶτοι, and that these countermeasures were periodically revised to keep pace with fresh developments.

The close attention to infantry tactics in the military manuals consulted here reminds us that the Byzantines by no means neglected this component of their army in the middle period. The use of infantry was essentially defensive — in battle, on the march and in protecting encampments or fortresses — but was nevertheless indispensable in support of cavalry[35]. In a broader context, the development of infantry tactics from the *Sylloge* to the *Praecepta* to the *Tactica* of Nikephoros Ouranos strengthens the argument that in this period the Byzantines did attempt to combine theory with practice and to pass their conclusions on for further thought. It is no coincidence that by the end of the tenth century their position along the Arab frontiers was much stronger than it had been one hundred years before.

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35. Cf. Dagron's remarks on the role of infantry along the Byzantine-Arab frontier in *Le Traité sur la guérilla*, p. 190-193.

# [16]

# The Battles of Dorostolon (971)

## Rhetoric and Reality

STAMATINA McGRATH

Byzantine chroniclers inherited the art of historiography from the Greek and Roman historians of the ancient world. Aware of the literary tradition they upheld, Byzantines wrote histories that rival in quality and content those of western medieval historians.[1] The study of Byzantine chronicles has shown them to be valuable sources of direct and indirect information,[2] even if their authors are often responsible for exaggeration and bias in their accounts.[3] In the description of significant events, battles are especially important for the effect they had on the fortunes of the empire. Few Byzantine battle descriptions survive in detail, and those that do are often presentations of what ought to have taken place rather than a moment by moment account of what actually occurred on the battlefield. Patriotism, respect for a patron's affiliations, personal biases, and a large collection of Byzantine military manuals from which to gather information on proper battle organization may well form the backbone of Byzantine military historiography. In spite of this tendency among historians to describe military engagements in a standardized form, it is possible to extract worthwhile information from texts by close examination and comparison of descriptions. The questions to be asked should focus on what the historians have included or omitted, how they have

1. Barnes, *History of Historical Writing.*
2. For a discussion and bibliography, see Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power,* 162–78.
3. For more extensive discussion of Byzantine historiography see Ljubarskij, "Neue Tendenzen," 560–66.

changed the events they are describing, and how the events con-
form to the military-manual version of battle activities.[4]

The purpose of this essay is to examine the rhetoric of battle as
it appears in two Byzantine accounts: the *Synopsis Historiarum* of
John Skylitzes, and the *Historia* of Leo the Deacon.[5] The battles
to be discussed took place at Dorostolon in 971, between the ar-
mies of John Tzimiskes and Svjatoslav, leader of the Rus'. Even
though both authors possibly used the same original source,[6] there
are considerable differences in the presentation of the events they
describe. Leo the Deacon was a contemporary of John Tzimiskes.
His history covers the years 956 to 976.[7] Leo presents the leaders
of the armies in great detail. His Byzantine patriotism and personal
views often direct his observations, and his chronology is not en-
tirely reliable.[8] Skylitzes, on the other hand, wrote his history at
the end of the eleventh century. He was *kouropalates* and *droun-
garios tes viglas* in 1092 and had personal experience of the Byz-
antine military administration.[9] His history covers the period
between 811 and 1057 and is intended to continue the narratives
of George the *Synkellos* and Theophanes the Confessor.[10] Sky-
litzes' account of the battles of Dorostolon is simplified, and lacks
the description of personalities characteristic in the text of Leo the
Deacon. His version, however, has some details lacking in Leo's
history. The differences in the presentation of the battles will be
discussed with the aid of twentieth-century military historiogra-
phy in an effort to distinguish historiographical models from facts.

Before studying the specific details of the battle, it is necessary
to review the sequence of events. In the spring of 971, the emperor
John Tzimiskes was forced to deal with the occupation of the Bul-
gar kingdom by the Rus'.[11] After preparing a large army of infan-

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4. I would like to thank Dr. Eric McGeer for his very helpful suggestions on
the topic of Byzantine military rhetoric and warfare.

5. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*; and Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.).

6. The source of Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon is no longer extant. For a com-
plete discussion of their sources see Siuziumov, "Ob istočnikac," 106–66.

7. For a detailed study of Leo the Deacon, see Panagiotakes, Λέων ὁ Διάκονος.

8. For a discussion of problems in the chronology of Svjatoslav's previous cam-
paigns against Byzantium, see Stokes, "Background and Chronology," 44–57.

9. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, vii–xi ("Introduction").

10. Ibid., 3–4.

11. On the chronology of the campaign see Dölger, "Chronologie des grossen
Feldzuges," 274–76.

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try, cavalry, an assortment of siege equipment, and a formidable naval force, he set out to Dorostolon. Tzimiskes crossed the mountain passes to Bulgaria without harassment from the Russian army.[12] His first stop was Preslav, where after a number of confrontations, the forces of the Rus' were defeated in a bloody battle before the palace of the Bulgar king. From Preslav the Byzantine forces advanced to Dorostolon. After a three-month siege of the city, the Byzantines overpowered the Rus' troops and forced their surrender. The defeated Svjatoslav and his army were offered securities, the continuation of commercial treaties with the Byzantine empire, and provisions to return to their homeland. Byzantium's victory over the Rus' relieved the empire from the attacks of that nation for nearly a hundred years and extended Byzantine borders to incorporate the Bulgar kingdom.[13]

Before looking at the texts themselves one needs a sense of what John Keegan calls the "battle piece."[14] When dealing with the past in general and military exploits in particular, authors of all historical periods are prone to impose upon the historical accounts their own collection of traditional conventions and assumptions, and tend to present the events they are narrating in a rigid, conventional form.[15] Four models commonly applied to battle descriptions are: 1) uniformity of behavior, where there are no reports of cowardice or bravery in the text, only perfect obedience to the orders of the commanding officer, 2) lack of continuity in the actions described, suggesting that the author does not have all the details of the battle, 3) rigid stratification of the army into groups of warriors (infantry, cavalry) where few men, usually officers, are mentioned by name, and 4) oversimplification of the behavior of men participating in battle.[16] Close examination of the texts will show that the characteristics suggested by Keegan for modern European

12. Runciman suggests that the mountain passes were left unguarded because the Rus' were dealing with Bulgar unrest in the North and could not spare any troops. See Runciman, *History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, 208–9. For a different view see Stokes, "Balkan Campaigns," 491–94. Stokes believes that Tzimiskes offered Svjatoslav a false peace treaty that gave the emperor time to cross the mountain passes unharmed.

13. Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 128–59. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 294–309. Also Schlumberger, *Épopée byzantine*, 132–48.

14. Keegan, *Face of Battle*, 36–46.

15. Ibid., 36.

16. Ibid., 39.

military historiography can be applied to Byzantine texts as well. After removing the artificial model of battle description, it is possible to recover fragments of realistic accounts that are able to clarify the battle as well as provide better understanding of the author and his time.

Skylitzes' account of the initial conflict is simple and short but conveys the feel of the struggle and the unity of the Byzantine forces. The army arrived a few miles from Dorostolon. The two leaders, John Tzimiskes and Svjatoslav, spoke words of encouragement to their men in order to strengthen their spirits. As the trumpets sounded, the armies collided with equal fighting spirit. On the first assault the Byzantines broke the Rus' lines, but the Rus' responded with equal strength. The battle remained undecided for some time, until the Byzantines charged the left of the Rus' and slowed their advance. Observing the Rus' reorganizing, the emperor decided to take matters into his own hands. He sent some of his men where the battle line had been weakened by the previous assault, and himself charged against the enemy, a brave act which encouraged his army to do the same. Skylitzes mentions that victory changed sides in the battle twelve times, but the Rus' were overcome and many were killed while others were taken prisoner. Those who were able to get away escaped to Dorostolon.[17]

Leo the Deacon added liveliness to the battle description with a number of psychological insights. The troops were motivated by pride, among other things, and did not want to be embarrassed by losing to those they considered inferior opponents. The Rus' in their short military history were not accustomed to losing, while the Byzantines felt that they must not be defeated ingloriously by a nation accustomed to fighting on foot (obviously Leo had in mind the pride of the Byzantine army, the mounted *kataphraktoi*).[18] The Rus' counterattack was accompanied by the roaring of the barbarians.[19] Leo added that many men fell on both sides. Here, as in Skylitzes, the emperor's presence on the battlefield and his encouraging words to the troops turned the encounter in favor of the Byzantines. The trumpets sounded, and the Byzantines ad-

17. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes. *Synopsis,* 299, lines 42–300, line 64.

18. On the organization of the Byzantine infantry in the tenth century, see McGeer, "Infantry versus Cavalry," 135–45. For the development of the cavalry in Byzantium, see Dennis, ed., *Three Byzantine Military Treatises,* 155, 191.

19. Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 141, line 5.

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vanced with a loud clamor. Leo could not hide his bias, which was expressed clearly in the language he used to describe the war cries of the Byzantines and those of the Rus'. In the first case the Byzantines attacked with a distinct battle cry. In comparison the roaring of the Rus' simply created a barbaric racket.[20] The same applies to Leo's perception of the battle techniques of the two armies. The Rus' attack was dominated by anger and beastlike behavior,[21] while their adversaries moved with experience and technical knowledge.[22] The Byzantines celebrated their first victory at Dorostolon by praising the emperor. He in turn rewarded them by granting promotions in rank, providing feasts, and at the same time reminding them to fight with greater willingness.[23]

The authors' accounts agree on the main points of the battle. It is evident, however, that Skylitzes is primarily concerned with the actions of the emperor as a general, while the troops fall into a secondary category. There are no accounts of the names and actions of individual officers or soldiers, and few details of the military action that made the battle a Byzantine success. Beyond the seemingly generic approach to battle description, however, Skylitzes is able to convey the power of Tzimiskes' personality and his able generalship. Leo's account, on the other hand, does not contain significantly greater amounts of information, and he is also responsible for rigid stratification of the army into one big mass led by the emperor. Leo, however, has made an extra effort to communicate a psychological background to the conflict. He attempts to explain the fear that dominated the minds of the soldiers in the beginning of the confrontation: the Rus' fearing defeat and humiliation after an impressive record of victories, the Byzantines considering the embarrassment of losing to a barbaric nation with inferior military technology. In demonstrating John Tzimiskes' able generalship, Leo also reveals the psychology of motivation that directed the Byzantine armies. Relying on Skylitzes account, one does not get a sense of why the soldiers were really fighting other than the traditional concept of loyalty to emperor and coun-

20. Ibid., 141, line 13 and line 5.
21. Ibid., 141, line 3.
22. Ibid., 141, lines 5–6. Regarding the necessity of good order in the Byzantine army, see Dennis, ed., *Three Byzantine Military Treatises,* 45–47. For further discussion see Haldon, "Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology," 11–47.
23. Leo Diaconus, (Bonn ed.), 140, lines 14–141, line 19.

try, thus giving an almost magical quality to the ability of an emperor (or a general) to lead armies to battle. Leo, on the other hand, shows battle motivation fueled by pragmatic concerns. Beyond the basic desire to survive, soldiers fought to receive tangible rewards: higher positions in the hierarchy, greater payment, or a larger share of battle spoils. Accepting the human nature of the soldiers, Leo the Deacon offers a more realistic picture of the battle scene. He also shows that Tzimiskes was not only a good tactician, but also a good politician in his relations with his army.

Skylitzes' history has preserved an original episode from the siege of Dorostolon.[24] After several battles and a tight siege by land and sea, the Rus', who had sought refuge in Dorostolon, were low on supplies. On a dark, stormy night Svjatoslav sent out two thousand of his men to collect supplies in small wooden boats. On their return (presumably some time later) these men came upon a group of Byzantines who were watering the horses and collecting wood. The Rus' approached them unnoticed, killed many of them, and returned to the city unharmed. Skylitzes records that the incident angered the emperor, who blamed the leaders of the fleet for not detecting the exit of the Rus'. John Tzimiskes threatened the naval commanders with death if a similar situation were to occur.[25]

The event is significant not only as a lesson in strategy, but also as an example of the historical evidence that can be derived from military histories. In accordance with the advice in most military treatises the emperor's tactic did not center on defeating the enemy in a single battle.[26] On the contrary, he attempted to break down the enemy's defenses by cutting their supplies, by using siege equipment to destroy enemy lives and fortifications, by cutting off access to the city by water, and by employing all available military technology and psychology on the battlefield. Tzimiskes' elaborate preparations before setting out on the campaign prove that he expected the conflict to be long and difficult. If Skylitzes had written his history following a standard formula for the description of military events, this anecdote would be out of place. Its presence in the history confirms that Skylitzes (and his original source) was interested in offering an accurate account of the conflict. The absence of this event from Leo's history is somewhat surprising since

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24. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 302, lines 21–41.
25. Ibid., 302, lines 40–41.
26. Dain "Stratégistes byzantins," 317–93.

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he usually has a more detailed account than Skylitzes. The event
is uniquely fitted to the situation in Dorostolon, which required a
siege both by land and by sea; it also added continuity to the story
of the siege and helped explain the position of the participants.
Skylitzes' presentation of the siege story offers a gem of historical
fact and a possible insight regarding the purpose of the work. Sky-
litzes clearly means to teach his readers with this story the value
of alert and vigilant warriors and the consequences of laxity in a
siege. The emperor himself cannot be blamed for the incident be-
cause he was in command of the army, not the fleet. It is clear,
however, that the naval officers with their careless behavior caused
harm to the Byzantine camp both by losing their own men, and
by allowing the reinforcement of supplies to enter the city.

   If we presume that both Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon had access
to approximately the same sources, patriotism may have prevented
the inclusion of other embarrassing instances in both histories. For
example, Skylitzes omits the unflattering story regarding an officer
and relative of the emperor, John Kourkouas. Leo, on the other
hand, presents Kourkouas as a drunken officer butchered in an ill-
fated accident. Whether knowledge of Kourkouas' endeavors came
from private sources or from the original source of the two authors
is unclear. Sensing the eminent attack of the Rus' on the siege
equipment that he was guarding, Kourkouas rode out with his
chosen men against the enemy. Leo mentions that Kourkouas had
been drunk and half asleep—it was after their midday meal. After
falling in a pit, Kourkouas' horse threw him off, and he was
quickly slaughtered by a throng of barbarians who mistook him
for the emperor because of the excessive ornamentation of his ar-
mor. The author mentions in passing that the dead officer, Kour-
kouas, was known to have plundered the holy vessels of many
Bulgars, and made them his personal treasure.[27] Apart from Leo's
negative view of John Kourkouas, the episode adds information
on the structure of the soldiers' lives and the dietary supplies car-
ried by the Byzantines on their campaigns. Contrary to the advice
given in some military manuals, wine seems to have been present
and available to the troops.[28]

   27. Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 147, lines 24–148, line 22.
   28. This is not the only occasion wine was offered to Byzantine soldiers. Sky-
litzes mentions that wine and water were offered to the troops, see below note

## The Battles of Dorostolon                    159

With respect to the same incident, Skylitzes presents the heroic resistance of a Byzantine officer whose death led to the protection of valuable siege machines instrumental in destroying the walls and the spirits of the besieged Rus'. In Skylitzes' version Kourkouas responded quickly to the Rus' attack, riding his horse into the midst of the enemy. One of the enemy lances hit his horse, and the officer fell among the enemy. Kourkouas was murdered violently, but the Byzantines rushed against the Rus', saved the siege machines, and pushed the enemy back into the city.[29] In this case Skylitzes seems to have simplified the events and superimposed standardized heroic behavior. Believing that his history would record events and, at the same time, educate the reader, the author may have felt justified in eliminating examples of improper behavior (drunkenness in this case) by Byzantine officers. The death of a military leader or officer in battle, in most cases, led to the demoralization of the soldiers and retreat, as seen in numerous specific examples in the histories. Here, however, Kourkouas' men were able to hold off the Rus' attack and force their retreat into the city.

The last battle at Dorostolon is a perfect example of how facts can be extracted from models of battle rhetoric, and how these artificial models were used by the Byzantines to satisfy moral and religious needs. According to Skylitzes, Svjatoslav consulted with his officers and decided that the only honorable solution to the conflict was to meet the Byzantines on the battlefield. When the final battle commenced, the Rus' fought bravely, and the Byzantines began to falter after suffering from heat and thirst as they were heavily armed and it was the middle of the day.[30] Observing the situation, the emperor rushed to help with those around him, and ordered that the soldiers be brought flasks filled with a blend of wine and water to quench their thirst. As a result, the Byzantines were able to counterattack with great strength. The battle remained equal between the two armies. Perceiving the narrowness of the battlefield, the emperor instructed his generals to move back to a wider plain. Tzimiskes ordered his men to feign retreat in

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30. For the supplies recommended for the army, see Dennis, ed., Maurice, *Strategikon*, 67.

29. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 304, lines 74–85.

30. Ibid., 306, lines 45–53.

hopes that the Rus' army could be deceived into a reckless advance. During this engagement one general, Theodore of Misthia, fell to the ground after his horse had been hit by a spear. A fierce battle broke out around him. Theodore defended himself by lifting a dead Rus' by the belt and using him as a shield. After a short time he was able to make his way back to the Byzantine line.[31]

In a later episode of the battle, the son of the ruler of Crete, Anemas, saw Svjatoslav fighting nearby. Riding his horse out against him, Anemas struck him in the middle of his head. The Rus' leader was saved only by his protective armor. Surrounded by many Rus', Anemas was killed after impressing the enemy with his heroic actions. At this time a windstorm rose from the south and blew directly into the eyes of the Rus'.[32] Ahead of the Byzantine army everyone saw a man on a white horse breaking the front lines of the Rus' attack. The man was not seen before or after the battle, and it is said that he was Theodore, one of the martyrs,[33] and the patron saint of the emperor. The storm and the warrior frightened the Rus' who turned to the city, but found Skleros before the gates. There was a great deal of confusion on the field; as a result, many Rus' were killed both by a stampede of their own men and by the attacking Byzantines. Skylitzes records that almost all of the Rus' were wounded. Knowing that there was no other hope, Svjatoslav sought to make a treaty with the Byzantines. In the treaty the Rus' were to be permitted to return to their country with all their men. The commercial rights of the Rus' were to remain intact. A brief meeting took place between Svjatoslav and the emperor, and the war was ended.[34]

This last battle description is startlingly powerful in both the account of Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon. The emperor's actions indicated his continuous involvement in the battle and demonstrated his military ability. Tzimiskes' strategies and the ability of

31. Ibid., 307, lines 65–74.
32. Ibid., 308, line 10: Skylitzes believes that the storm was divinely sent to help the Byzantines: λέγεται δὲ καὶ θειοτέρας τότε τυχεῖν τοὺς 'Ρωμαίους ἐπικουρίας.
33. Both authors mention a vision seen by a woman in Constantinople the day before the battle, a vision which foretold the martyr's appearance on the battlefield. See Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* 308, lines 19–309, line 25; and Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 154, lines 9–22. The martyr Theodore was a well-known Byzantine military saint, Theodore Stratelates: see Delehaye, *Légendes grecques.*
34. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* 307, lines 76–309, line 43.

his army show the effectiveness of the new military training that
made so many military successes possible for the next fifty years.
Even at a most difficult moment in the battle Tzimiskes was able
to order a delicate strategic move—the feigned retreat to a wider
battlefield—which was executed perfectly in spite of the losses the
Byzantines had been suffering.[35] But there are other Byzantine sol-
diers that gained recognition in this particular conflict. Theodore
of Misthia and Anemas were singled out for their heroic actions
and fighting ability. Their spectacular feats of bravery are de-
scribed in great detail and provide a very realistic depiction of the
battle. The fact that Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon disagree on the
exact place where Anemas struck Svjatoslav does not particularly
discredit either account. According to Skylitzes, Anemas struck
Svjatoslav on the middle of the head, an admittedly difficult ac-
complishment for a man charging on horseback.[36] Leo reports that
Anemas hit Svjatoslav between the neck and the shoulder, an area
protected by heavy chain mail. The difference may be due to a
variation in the sources or an attempt by one of the authors to
make the scene even more spectacular and dramatic, while show-
ing Anemas to be as excellent in his aim as he was in bravery. In
Leo's account, Anemas was able, in a final act of heroism, to kill
many Rus' before being killed himself.[37] Anemas' bravery in this
battle is consistent with the warrior's heroic acts in an earlier part
of the campaign.[38] Even though the mass of soldiers does not gain
the acknowledgement modern military historians demand in order
to verify the authenticity of a battle piece, the narratives of the
battle of Dorostolon come alive with the sights and sounds of the
conflict.

Skylitzes' battle chronicle ends abruptly with the resolution of
the contest by divine intervention. A windstorm and the presence
of the martyr Theodore on the field, just after Anemas' death, led
the Byzantine army to victory. This artificial ending to the struggle
is in contrast with the factual information the author has provided
in previous pages, but it shows the deeply imbedded Byzantine
belief that men are unable to resolve conflicts based on their virtue,
strength, and wisdom alone. Divine intervention was necessary to

35. Dennis, ed., *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 99–101.
36. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 308 lines 5–6.
37. Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 153, lines 1–8.
38. Ibid., 149, lines 4–17.

alter fate and give justice to the righteous. The battle for superiority between the Byzantines and the Rus' was not only a contest to demonstrate greater strength; it was also a struggle to win a moral victory over the powers of evil—the enemies of Byzantium.

Leo the Deacon's account differs somewhat from Skylitzes' version. Although both agree on the basic events of the battle, Leo the Deacon places greater emphasis on the strategic abilities of Tzimiskes that ultimately led to the victory over the Rus'. The narrative begins with a powerful Rus' attack that destroyed many horses. Leo does not give any other excuse for the Byzantine inability to overcome the Rus' other than the enemy's strength in the field. It appears that the Rus' were adjusting to the charge of the *kataphraktoi,* and were able to slow down the advance of the mounted troops with the effective use of their archers.[39] Anemas' demise is significant for the impact it had on the morale of the two armies. Leo writes that the death of Anemas gave strength to the Rus' who began to attack with greater fervor, while the Byzantines retreated. At this critical moment Tzimiskes renewed the attack by placing himself in the forefront. This demonstration of fearlessness inspired the troops to stop their flight and renew their attack. Leo recognizes the Byzantine officer Bardas Skleros for his successful fulfillment of orders. Skleros cut off the Rus' return to the city causing the battle to end in the slaughter of the Rus' troops.

Leo's description differs from Skylitzes' version in including the emperor's charge just before the windstorm. Whereas Skylitzes attributes Tzimiskes' final victory at Dorostolon directly to divine intervention, Leo also gives credit to the emperor and his able generalship that redirected the Byzantine army against the enemy. At the critical moment of the battle the Byzantine troops commanded by their emperor turned their horses and charged the enemy. Just then they were aided by a divinely sent windstorm and the appearance of the martyr Theodore ahead of the Byzantine army. Both Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon relate the phenomenon in similar terms.[40] The miraculous incident resolves the violence of battle in the most acceptable way. If the Byzantine soldiers, the emperor, or the reader of the histories had any doubt of the validity of the

39. Speidel, "Catafractarii," 151–56.
40. Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* 309, lines 19–25; Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 154, lines 10–22.

reasons and motives that led to the war with the Rus', the divine presence, verified by the appearance of the martyr, confirmed the soundness of the Byzantine cause.

Before presenting the terms of the treaty, Leo made an attempt to understand the emotional condition of Svjatoslav. He suggested that sadness and desperation over the loss of Svjatoslav's men were replaced by a sense of responsibility and determination to protect the remainder of his army and return home. Svjatoslav's psychological profile showed a man full of dignity and pride as well as a leader with a great sense of responsibility towards his men. Svjatoslav was also shown as a shrewd politician, who although defeated, managed to negotiate the maintenance of the trade treaties between the Rus' and Byzantium. The number of dead seems exaggerated in Leo's version (Skylitzes mentions that many Rus' were killed and most of the surviving men were injured, but gives no numbers). Leo estimates that fifteen thousand Rus' died in the battle while only three hundred Byzantines were killed, although he too admits that many were wounded.

The purpose of this paper has been to examine Byzantine military historiography in light of the siege and battles of Dorostolon in 971. The study has centered on the examination of two Byzantine accounts of the battle and the differences in expression and description of the events. Putting aside the patriotic tendencies of the authors and standardized models of heroic behavior, we are able to consider the conflict in a different light. Above all the campaign was fought and won by the Byzantines based on their superiority in numbers, supplies, and military technology. We must accept that the battle scenes described real events, and helped explain the circumstances that led to the Byzantine victory. The organization, obedience, and skill of the Byzantine troops may well have been the result of the reconstruction of the army that took place under the emperors Nikephoros Phokas and John Tzimiskes and the introduction of the *athanatoi* during the latter's reign.[41] Leo recorded with pride the organized advances and calculated retreats as well as the ability of the troops to attack and defeat such a respectable enemy as the Rus'. Aware of the terror the Rus' had caused the Byzantines in Constantinople,[42] Leo emphasizes

41. Dennis, ed., *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, 250, 255.
42. The vision of the woman is a clear indication of the awareness Constantin-

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the ability of both armies with a distinct bias in favor of the Byzantine *taxis*. As a distant chronicler separated by one hundred years from the actual battle, Skylitzes can only see the superiority of the Byzantines as part of the divine order of the world. Both Skylitzes and Leo the Deacon reveal in their histories valuable details concerning the conflict. Leo makes the reader aware of all the sights and sounds of the battle and attempts to relay the emotional world of the participants—fear, faith, greed, and heroism. He introduces the concept that not all Byzantine officers were worthy, capable men (as in the example of John Kourkouas). Skylitzes makes a similar comment through his description of the incompetent naval officers. Both historians reveal that the relationship between the human and the divine was perceived in close personal terms and that the fate of the empire was directed by heavenly influence.

The baggage of preconceptions found in Leo the Deacon's and Skylitzes' work is not unique to these authors or to Byzantine historians in general. The nature of military historiography seems to be based on an assortment of models and assumptions difficult to remove even from contemporary reports. Much more information on the battles of Dorostolon would be required to make the accounts complete—eye witness descriptions, battle and siege plans, logistics reports, and geographical maps, to name a few. But even the present evidence in the texts offers a captivating picture of Byzantine warfare and valuable details on the battles they describe.

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opolitans had of the danger from the North. Detailed descriptions in Thurn, ed., Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* 308, lines 19–309, line 25; and Leo Diaconus (Bonn ed.), 154, lines 10–22.

# Part IV
# Weapons and Armour

# [17]

## Some Aspects of
## Early Byzantine Arms and Armour

### JOHN HALDON

THE ARCHAEOLOGY of the arms and armour of the middle and later Roman periods, roughly from the second to mid-fifth century AD, has made very considerable progress in recent years. We now have reasonably good, broadly based typologies of late Roman shield-boss and helmet types, as well as swords and belt-fittings, buckles and decorated plates, spear-, lance- and arrow-heads, and a certain amount of information about defensive armour and related equipment for both men and horses. But this level of information is unfortunately much lower for the subsequent period. Indeed, there is hardly any specifically 'Byzantine' military equipment to be found on public display in the museums of the Balkan lands including Greece, or modern Turkey, the territories which formed the heartlands of the medieval East Roman state. Nevertheless enough late Roman material from the western, Balkan and eastern frontier regions has been recovered to give some idea of the situation at the beginning of the period with which this article is concerned.[1]

   This is a reflection of several factors, among the most important of which are the simple facts of the failure to identify artefacts found on excavated sites as being possibly East Roman, and the accidental destruction of such objects. No battlefield excavations have been carried out, and, with the exception of warriors' graves or interments belonging to non-Christian soldiers serving on imperial territory, Christian inhumations relating to clearly military contexts are almost non-existent in the excavated record. In addition, Christian burial practices generally discouraged the deposition of grave-goods, especially of a military nature, so that even where cemeteries have been excavated within the Byzantine area it is difficult to distinguish soldiers' graves from others, since no military equipment is included. Excavated cemetery sites in the 'barbarian' regions of both the Balkans and the West show that, as the process of Christianization took hold, fewer and fewer military grave goods accompanied interments.[2] We are thus very heavily dependent upon non-Christian burials which, with one or two exceptions, are mostly outside the Empire's territory, for information about the nature and development of Byzantine arms and armour. These include burials within the Frankish and Germanic kingdoms of the period up to the seventh century, plus a few exceptional cases of royal burials thereafter, in Scandinavia and eastern-central Europe, and in the northern and

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[1] M.C. Bishop and J.N.C. Coulston, *Roman military equipment from the Punic wars to the fall of Rome* (London, 1993), esp. pp. 122–82; and P. Southern and Karen R. Dixon, *The late Roman army* (London, 1996), pp. 89–126.

[2] See the concluding remarks of P. Deloghu, in *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*, ed. L. Paroli (Firenze, 1997), pp. 425–30.

central Balkan regions for the period up to the Christianization of such territories which occurred from the later ninth to the tenth century onwards.

Even so, remarkably few military artefacts such as swords or blades of any sort, arrow-heads, shield-bosses, buckles, pieces of armour or helmets, can be firmly identified as 'Byzantine'. This is the case for the period after the sixth century in Asia Minor or the southern Balkans. Italy up to the later seventh century is an exception, as will be seen. The unfortunate result is that Byzantine weapons technology, especially for the period from the middle of the seventh century onwards, has to be reconstructed almost entirely on the basis of literary accounts of often dubious, or at least problematic, reliability, plus illustrations in manuscripts, wall-paintings or mosaics, or relief carving in stone. All such media bring with them problems of stylization and archetype, while the comparative evidence from outside the Empire's lands must be used with care. Within the last 15 or so years only one monograph dealing with the subject of personal arms and armour in the Byzantine world has appeared, and this relies upon minimal reference to archaeological documentation.[3]

For the purposes of the present discussion the period covered by the term 'early Byzantine' refers to that from the sixth to the tenth century. The Byzantine world was not a hermetically sealed cultural zone, of course; the arms and armour of the East Roman empire was part of a much wider picture, a point that is emphasized by other contributions in this anthology. It contributed to, as well as derived inspiration from, the evolution of weapons and a military panoply common to the Western Eurasian world. Archaeology in particular has demonstrated both how close and how frequent were contacts between the Roman world and that of Eurasian steppe cultures, even if, after the sixth century, the evidence becomes meagre. In fact a common field of technological development existed from the central and western European lands into and beyond the Middle East. As a result of these contacts, and in particular through warlike as well as more peaceful relations with those nomadic groups who inhabited or passed through steppe regions north of the Danube and Black Sea, elements of central Asian and even more easterly military equipment and practices permeated into the Balkans, Asia Minor and Middle East. In the late sixth century, the stirrup was adopted from the Avars, who ultimately brought it from the eastern steppes and China. The Avars likewise probably stimulated the use of lamellar armour on a more widespread basis than before. In the eighth or ninth century the single-edged cavalry sabre and the lamellar cuirass with its associated splinted arm-guards were adopted from the steppes, probably through the Khazars and Magyars.

The sources for the study of medieval East Roman weapons and armour can be grouped into three categories. First, there are descriptions in histories or other literary sources including letters and hagiographical writings. In particular there are the sometimes antiquarian military treatises compiled by generals or emperors, most of which date to the sixth century or the tenth century. Secondly, there is the archaeological evidence. Thirdly, and last, there is the evidence of pictorial representation, whether in manuscripts, as full- or half-page illustrations or marginal sketches and drawings, or in the form of wall-paintings and mosaics decorating churches, tombs or other structures. Whereas the former category is on the whole limited to material produced in the late Roman–Byzantine, Western European or Middle Eastern worlds, the art historical and archaeological evidence is drawn both from these regions and the Eurasian steppe lands as far away as north-western China. Each type of evidence has its drawbacks. The textual evidence often employs archaic descriptive terms which hide the contemporary reality of the account, for example, while the conventions of pictorial representation in the different cultures frequently result in an equally obscure image.

[3] T.G. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen: ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung* (Vienna, 1988).

The archaeological data cannot always be placed in a context which is sufficiently precise to make it meaningful when placed in a broader context. Nevertheless, by bringing all these different types of information together it is possible to sketch in an often vague but nevertheless plausible picture of the main developments in late Roman and early Byzantine arms and armour.[4]

While weaponry and defensive equipment affected the way in which armies fought each other, and had important implications for the ways in which they were organized at the tactical level, their use also reflected the functional demands of the tactics employed in a given context. As a result there has generally been a dynamic interplay between the two. The imperatives of survival in warfare have tended, with some interesting exceptions, to be more powerful in human history than those of socially determined military organization and institutions. Consequently new weapons and technological innovations have usually had a dissolving or at least strongly modifying impact on the latter, although the exact mechanism of change is not always easily perceived through the sources. This was no less true of Rome and Byzantium than it was of neighbouring societies or cultures.

The development of cavalry warfare in the Roman world from the third century onward provides a good example of this, for it brought about a radical shift in both the emphasis in fighting and tactical structures, as well as in the numbers involved. This is not, however, an issue which I can pursue here. The real increase in the importance of cavalry seems, in fact, to have happened fairly late, contrary to the assumptions which have usually been made by military historians. For example, the balance of the admittedly limited evidence for the later fourth and fifth centuries suggests that the proportion of cavalry to infantry did not increase dramatically as a result of the Roman defeat at Adrianople. On the contrary, it appears to have remained much the same. At the battle of Strasbourg, for instance, Julian had some three thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry, while over a century later in 478 a field army in the East is reported to have consisted of 30,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry. The proportion of mounted to foot soldiers is certainly greater than it had been in a legionary army of the first century AD, but cavalry are still by no means either the dominant or the key element in late Roman armies of this period.[5]

This is not to ignore both the gradual adoption of a heavier panoply by Roman cavalry units, and the creation of some new heavy cavalry units during the later third, fourth and fifth centuries. But there is enough evidence for the period from the later fourth into the early sixth century to suggest that reasonably well-ordered Roman infantry were able to hold off and defeat 'barbarian' cavalry, and that the proportion of cavalry to infantry units remained approximately the same for the next century. This stood at roughly 1:3 in numbers of units although this

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[4] J.F. Haldon, 'Some aspects of Byzantine military technology from the sixth to the tenth centuries', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* i (1975), pp. 11–47, where the evidence from Byzantine sources is presented along with the literature relevant to the Central Asian pictorial evidence; Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.* Kolias presents a detailed analysis of the written sources and in particular the technical terminology employed, organized by theme: see pp. 37–64 on body-armour, esp. the terms *lōrikion, klibanion* and *zaba*; pp. 65–74 on arm- and leg-guards; pp. 75–87 on helmets; pp. 88–131 on shields. For weapons: pp. 133–61 on swords; pp. 162–72 on axes; pp. 173–84 on maces; pp. 185–213 on lance and spear. For some generalized comparative perspectives see also O. Gamber, 'Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Bewaffnung', *Waffen und Kostümkunde* xxxv (1993), pp. 1–22. The methodological issues associated with the East Roman tactical treatises are discussed in P. Schreiner, 'Zur Ausrüstung des Kriegers in Byzanz, im Kiewer Rußland und in Nordeuropa nach bildlichen und literarischen Quellen', *Les pays du nord et Byzance (Scandinavie et Byzance)*, ed. R. Zeitler, *Actes du colloque nordique et international de Byzantinologie tenu à Upsal 20–22 avril 1979. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Figura. Nova series* xix (Upsala, 1981), pp. 215–36. On the stirrup, see also A.D.H. Bivar, 'The stirrup and its origins', *Oriental Art* i/ii (1955), pp. 61–5; and 'Cavalry tactics and equipment on the Euphrates frontier', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xxvi (1972), pp. 273–91, esp. p. 286f. For a useful typological survey of stirrups from the Avar period, see L. Kovács, 'Über einige Steigbügeltypen der Landnahmezeit', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* xxxvii (1986), pp. 195–225.

[5] H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350–425* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 105–6.

proportion alters when we compare absolute numbers of men, since cavalry unit sizes were smaller.[6]

Within the Roman cavalry there was an increase, from the late third to the early fifth century, in the numbers of very heavily armoured units. It has, in fact, been calculated that by the time the *Notitia dignitatuum* (a late fourth- or early fifth-century document giving the order of battle of the eastern and western armies) was written, heavy armoured cavalry (*cataphracti* and *clibanarii*) made up some 15% of the *comitatenses* cavalry. This was in comparison with lancers and other heavy cavalry who formed 61%, and light cavalry who formed 24%. Paradoxically, however, the same documents make it clear that there were in turn more of these cavalry units assigned to the *limitanei* than to the field armies. Thus cavalry were still regarded throughout the fourth and fifth centuries as most valuable when used in scouting and patrolling, or covering the wings and flanks of a mainly infantry army.[7]

Cavalry in the mid-sixth century are described by the historian Procopius who was an eye-witness to many of the battles he describes. They also feature at a slightly later date in the *Strategikon*, a late sixth-century tactical treatise attributed to the Emperor Maurice (582–602), although it was almost certainly written by one of the leading officers of the day.[8] The *Strategikon* suggests that the influence of the Avars was at this time particularly powerful. According to Procopius,[9] the best-armed horseman wore a mail coat reaching to his knees, on top of a thick padded coat to absorb the shock of any blows. He wore a helmet,[10] a small circular shield strapped to the left shoulder which was another feature found on the steppe,[11] and was armed with a lance, sword hung from a baldric or shoulder strap on the left side,[12] and bow with a quiver on his right side.[13] His horse was unarmoured, since the cavalry described by Procopius functioned both as shock troops and as highly mobile mounted archers.[14] A somewhat earlier anonymous treatise specifies further that the front-rank cavalry mounts were to be armoured with this armour covering their necks, chests and flanks. Although this source does not indicate whether the horse-armour was of mail or some other material, Persian

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[6]  See Elton's discussion, *Warfare in Roman Europe, op. cit.*, pp. 80–2; 105–6. On the evolution of heavy cavalry, see J.W. Eadie, 'The development of Roman mailed cavalry', *Journal of Roman Studies* lvii (1967), pp. 161–73; Bivar, 'Cavalry equipment and tactics on the Euphrates frontier', *op. cit.*, pp. 274–81; and esp. J.C. Coulston, 'Roman, Parthian and Sassanian tactical developments', *The defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, eds. P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, British Archaeological Reports, International series S297 (i) (Oxford, 1986), pp. 59–75, at p. 60. For a broader but very useful survey, see O. Gamber, 'Kataphrakten, Clibanarier, Normannenreiter', *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* lxiv (1968), pp. 7–44.

[7]  Figures and analysis in D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum. Epigraphische Studien* 7/I (Düsseldorf/Köln, 1969), with comments in Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe, op. cit.*, pp. 106–7.

[8]  *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G.T. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 17 (Vienna, 1981); Engl. trans. G.T. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon. Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy* (Philadelphia, 1984), esp. i, 2.

[9]  *Procopius, History of the Wars*, ed. and trans. H.B. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1914–1928), I, i.9–15.

[10]  See below for types of helmet.

[11]  B. Laufer, *Chinese clay figures, I: Prolegomena on the history of defensive armor* (Chicago, 1914), p. 204; for later Middle Eastern parallels, H. Russell-Robinson, *Oriental armour* (London 1967), p. 33, with figs. 17a/b.

[12]  The long sword or *spatha*, introduced from the later second century, became standard for cavalry and infantry during the third and fourth centuries, although there were several variations on the basic pattern: see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 126–35 and 163–5; K.R. Dixon and P. Southern, *The Roman cavalry. From the first to the third century* AD (London, 1992), pp. 48–9. See in particular A. Kiss, 'Frühmittelalterliche byzantinische Schwerter im Karpatenbecken', *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* xxxix (1987), pp. 193–210; V. La Salvia, 'La fabbricazione delle spade delle grandi invasioni. Per la storia del "processo indiretto" nella lavorazione de ferro', *Quaderni medievali* xliv (1997), pp. 28–54.

[13]  J.C. Coulston, 'Roman archery equipment', *The production and distribution of Roman military equipment. Proceedings of the second Roman military equipment research seminar*, ed. M.C. Bishop, British Archaeological Reports S275 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 220–36; Dixon and Southern, *The Roman cavalry, op. cit.*, pp. 52–7.

[14]  Procopius, *loc. cit.*

illustrations dating from the third to sixth centuries, as well as in the central Asian evidence, depict both felt or leather and mail.[15] Their hooves were to be protected against caltrops by metal plates. This last practice was clearly continuously observed, for an account of an eleventh-century battle between imperial cavalry and Arab forces in Sicily refers to the metal plates which protected the Roman cavalry's hooves.[16]

Amongst the infantry it was primarily those who made up the first and second ranks who wore the full defensive panoply consisting of a 'breastplate', helmet, leg-armour in the form of splinted greaves made either of iron, leather or felt, and wide round or oval shields of one and a half metres diameter. These afforded them maximum protection. The shields of those in the front rank were also supposed to have spiked bosses. Spears and swords were the main offensive arms of such soldiers. There is a certain element of antiquarian detail in this information; for example the writer assumes that a solid breastplate will be worn, which may have applied to some officers and perhaps to soldiers in parade uniform, but for which there is no evidence from other contexts.[17] The sources would indicate that, in reality, a mail shirt would be worn with a padded jerkin or coat beneath.

It is clear, both from incidental references in accounts of battles and from these treatises, that such heavy armament was limited to a relatively small number of men destined primarily to serve in the foremost rank or ranks of the battle line. The majority of infantry and cavalry were less expensively equipped with quilted or padded coats called *zabai* reaching to the knee, and protection for the chest made of leather, possibly in the form of scale armour. The form of these coats may be represented by archaeological data from northern Iran and Central Asia, since the Iranian and steppe influence on middle Byzantine infantry and cavalry equipment remained strong. *Kabadia*, the long quilted or padded coats or kaftans, were sometimes also referred to in the sixth and seventh centuries as *zabai*[18] and are described in the treatises of the tenth century as heavy coats worn by both infantry and cavalry. But such garments were also familiar in the late Roman period, as shown by archaeological evidence.[19] For the infantry, shields, spears and padded coats would have been the predominant form of armament, whether or not helmets were worn. Light infantry wore quilted jerkins, may have carried small shields, and were armed

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[15] For Parthian, Sassanian and Central Asian examples, see R. Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians* (London, 1962), figs. 63c, 69, 165, 166; A. Belenitsky, *Central Asia* (Geneva, 1968), p. 101 for the wall-paintings at Khalchayen in Central Asia.

[16] The anonymous sixth-century treatise: 'Anonymi Peri strategias, The Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy', *Three Byzantine Military treatises*, ed. and trans. G.T. Dennis, text, transl. and notes, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, 25, *Dumbarton Oaks Texts* ix (Washington D.C., 1985), pp. 1–136 (hereafter *Strategy*). The eleventh-century battle of Troina was fought in 1040: see *Vita S. Philareti*, in *Acta Sanctorum* (Antwerp, 1643ff) April. I, 603–18, at p. 608.

[17] The text: *Strategy*, §16. 16–30.

[18] *Zaba* as a padded coat occurs only once: *Strategy*, §16.58, and usually referred to a mail coat or hauberk. In this context the term is used loosely for a protective garment where mail coats were not available. For some of the late Roman evidence for such padded coats, with a short discussion of related textiles and garments, see D. Bénazeth, and P. Dal-Prà, 'Quelques remarques à propos d'un ensemble de vêtements de cavaliers découverts dans tombes égyptiennes', *L'Armée romaine et les barbares du 4e au 7e siècle*, ed. M. Kazanski, *Colloque du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (Paris, 1993), pp. 367–377, dealing with long coats of central Asian origin in late Roman Egyptian tombs, possibly belonging to *federate*, mercenary or allied soldiers of high status.

[19] Niceph., *Praecepta, op. cit*, i.15; iii.67; *Syll. Tact., op. cit.*, 38, 4, 7. For the meanings of the word *kabadion* see Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 55–6 with literature; and T. Dawson, '*Kremasmata, kabadion, klibanion*: some aspects of middle Byzantine military equipment reconsidered', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* xxii (1998), pp. 38–50. Comparable garments from Central Asia and the Caucasus are discussed in A. Ierusalimskaja, 'Nouvelles excavations des sépultures des VIIe-IXe siècles au Caucase septentrional et le problème de datation de quelques groupes de soieries anciennes', in *Conference Papers of the International Institute of Conservation* (Stockholm, 1975), pp. 27–32; and M. Tilke, *Le costume: coupes et formes de l'Antiquité aux temps modernes* (Paris-Tübingen, 1967), p. 10 and pl. 4/4a. For the later forms, see esp. A. Ierusalimskaja and B. Borkopp, *Die Gräber der Mochtchevaja Balka* (Munich, 1996), p. 158; and the contribution of T. Dawson, below.

with slings, bows or javelins. These descriptions match what is known of the standard panoply of Roman infantry in the third century, as indicated by pictorial and archaeological evidence, and suggests a considerable degree of continuity in basic style and form of military garb.[20]

By the end of the sixth century, Avar influence was clearly expressed in the armament of the cavalry. Heavy cavalry troopers were now protected by long coats of mail, referred to as both *lorikia* and as *zabai*,[21] which were intended to cover them down to the ankle. They were made either of quilting or mail-on-quilting, being worn with a mail hood and neck-guard, a spiked helmet and small circular shield. Elite units also had arm-guards. The treatise states explicitly that much of this equipment was modelled on the Avar panoply, in particular the throat-guard or gorget, the thong attached to the middle of the lance, and the loose-fitting and decorated clothing.[22] Troopers also wore a wide, thick felt cloak to protect them from the weather, and were equipped with two stirrups; an innovation also copied from the Avars. The bow is not specified, but was probably of the Hun type as used by Roman forces since the fourth century. Unstrung bows were carried in leather sheath-like bow-cases. The *Strategikon* refers to quiver and bow-case apparently of Persian type, that is, shaped to hold the bow when strung as depicted on a number of Sassanian silver plates and bas-reliefs.[23] The panoply was completed by a cavalry sword,[24] while the horses were to be armoured in front with a skirt and neck-covering, either of iron (whether of mail or scale the text does not specify) or felt, or 'in the Avar fashion', perhaps suggesting lamellar of iron or, more likely, hardened leather.[25] Lamellar does not appear to have been used widely, although various types of lamellar construction for both horse and body armour were certainly known.[26]

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[20] Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 141ff.

[21] Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit*, pp. 37–44 for detailed discussion and sources.

[22] It has recently been argued that a number of weapons hitherto identified as Avar and deriving from archaeological contexts in southern and south-eastern Europe outside Roman territory may in fact be late Roman or early Byzantine: see U. von Freeden, 'Awarische Funde in Süddeutschland?', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Museums Mainz* xxxviii/2 (1993), pp. 593–627, suggesting that certain types of three-flanged spear- and lance-heads associated with Avar graves are probably of Byzantine provenance or style. For a developmental chronology of Avar weaponry, see P. Stadler, 'La chronologie de l'armement des Avars du VIe au VIIIe siècle', *L'Armée romaine et les barbares du 4e au 7e siècle*, ed Kazanski, *op. cit.*, pp. 445–57.

[23] C. Chiriac, 'About the presence of the composite bow at Tropaeum Traiani during the Protobyzantine period', *Études byzantines et post-byzantines, III*, eds. E. Popescu and T. Teoteoi (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 43–67, with recent literature. For the Byzantine evidence, and for bow-cases and quivers, see Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 21–2 and n. 52; for illustrations, see D. Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era: military technology in a time of change', *War and society in the eastern Mediterranean, 7th-15th centuries*, ed. Y. Lev (Leiden–New York–Köln, 1997), pp. 9–100, figs. 151–7.

[24] For a good example of the type of long cavalry sword employed by the Avars in the sixth and seventh centuries, see É. Somlósi, 'Restoration of the Csolnok Avar iron sword', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* xl (1988), pp. 207–10.

[25] In comparison with the period up to the third century, relatively few examples of late Roman mail and lamellar have been found throughout the empire, especially at frontier sites: see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, p. 167 (and cf. *ibid.*, pp. 141–5). For horse armour, see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 157–9, 182; J.C. Coulston, 'Roman, Parthian and Sassanian tactical development', *op. cit.*, pp. 60–8; Dixon and Southern, *The Roman cavalry, op. cit.*, pp. 61–3, 67–70. See also the depiction of a lamellar horse-trapper on the Sassanian rock-relief at Taq-i-Bustan, probably dating from the early seventh century: A.U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian art* (London–New York, 1938–9), vol. IV, pl. 161a; and for other types from the same era, Ghirshman, *Iran: Parthians and Sassanians, op. cit.*, fig. 446; Russell-Robinson, *Oriental armour, op. cit.*, figs. 26, 27, 65, 81. For further examples of earlier horse-armour from Doura-Europos see Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *op. cit.*, figs. 189–91.

[26] See Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *op. cit.*, figs. 193ff.; Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 14ff. Laced lamellar thigh-guards were excavated at Doura-Europos: see Dixon and Southern, *The Roman cavalry, op. cit.*, p. 43. A complete lamellar cuirass dateable to the later sixth century has been excavated from the site of old Pliska and other sites along the Danube plain, although it unfortunately remains unpublished (communication from Dr Andrew Poulter, University of Nottingham).

Infantry were less well armed. The best of the heavy infantry wore *zabai*, if they were available, and those in the front rank were also to wear greaves, apparently of iron or wood and thus probably splinted, plus helmets. All carried a spear, shield and 'Herul' sword. The Herul infantry figure prominently in Procopius' accounts of the war in Italy, and clearly influenced Imperial fighting techniques to some degree. The light infantry carried a small shield, a sling, javelins or bow, together with an arrow-guide to enable them to shoot short, heavy bolts as well as arrows of normal length. This was a device which would become common in the Islamic world, and which had perhaps also been introduced via the Avars to the Byzantine and Western world. 'Barbarian' influence is again clear here and, as with the cavalry, the *Stratēgikon* notes that the infantry should wear 'Goth' boots, short cloaks rather than the large, cumbrous 'Bulgar' (i.e. Hun-style) capes, and that some light infantry were equipped with Slav javelins.[27]

Defensive items such as shields and helmets are described only in the most general terms, if at all, in these accounts, but some evidence can be extracted from the archaeological record. Helmets with integral neck-guards made from a single sheet of metal had been replaced during the later second and third centuries by helmets made of two elements connected by a welded and riveted ridge piece. These also evolved decorative aspects while cheek- and neck-guards were attached via leather straps to the lining of the helmet. On the other hand not all such ridged helmets had crests. It is likely that this type derives from a Parthian–Iranian archetype. Other varieties consisted of several segments, some with hinged cheek-pieces and riveted neck-guards. Known as *Spangenhelms*, they probably derived from trans-Danubian models and were widely adopted during the fifth and sixth centuries. With some minor exceptions – for example, parade equipment – helmets of this general type were almost certainly the predominant form issued to soldiers of late Roman armies into the seventh century. If manuscript miniatures can be relied upon, they continued to be the main type of protective headgear into the later Byzantine period[28] (figs. VI–1 and VI–2).

Shields are more difficult to assess, but there were several types in use in the late Roman period. They were constructed either of laminated wood or joined solid boards, painted or covered with leather or cloth riveted fast, and varied in size according to their function (i.e. for

[27] *Strategy*, §§ 16, 17; Maurice, *Strat.*, i, 2–3; xii B,1–5, and cf. ii, 5.5; iii, 5.14; xi, 2. For detailed account with other sources: Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 18–24. For the Heruls see, for example, Procopius, *Wars*, III, xi. 11–13; Agathias, *Historiae*, i, 2.3; i, 14.4–6; ii, 7–9; etc. (text: *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri V*, ed. R. Keydell, Berlin, 1967; trans.: *Agathias, History*, trans. J.D.C. Frendo, Berlin-New York, 1975). On the arrow-guide carried by the light infantry archers, see D. Nishimura, 'Crossbows, arrow-guides and the *solenarion*', *Byzantion* lviii (1988), pp. 422–35; with literature and discussion in P.E. Chevedden, 'Artillery in late Antiquity: prelude to the Middle Ages', *The medieval city under siege*, eds. I.A. Corfis and M. Wolfe (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 131–73, at p. 144 n. 58. An example of a sixth to seventh-century two-piece Byzantine helmet can be seen in the Karak Castle Museum, in Jordan: see D. Nicolle, *Medieval warfare source book, 2: Christian Europe and its neighbours* (London, 1996), p. 22.

[28] K. Böhnen, 'Zur Herkunft der frühmittelalterlichen Spangenhelme', in *Actes du XIIe Congrès International des Sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques* 4 (Bratislava, 1993), pp. 199–207; M.C. Bishop and J.C.N. Coulston, *Roman military equipment, from the Punic wars to the fall of Rome* (London, 1993), pp. 167–72; S. James, 'Evidence from Dura Europos for the origins of late Roman helmets', *Syria* lxiii (1986), pp. 107–34; Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *op. cit.*, figs. 164–178. For archaeological evidence of the types of military accoutrements and weaponry from the late Roman period, see the relevant contributions in F. Vallet and M. Kazanski, eds., *L'Armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle. Mémoires de l'Association Française d'Archéologie Mérovingienne 5.* (Paris, 1993). For earlier Roman cavalry helmets, see the summary in Dixon and Southern, *The Roman cavalry*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–6. The evidence of ninth to twelfth-century minor arts such as ivory plaques and caskets, for example, as well as miniatures in illuminated manuscripts, offers some pictorial evidence which, although not yet corroborated archaeologically, may reasonably be taken as indicative of types of weaponry and defensive equipment. See in particular the analysis in A. Bruhn-Hoffmeyer, 'Military equipment in the Byzantine manuscript of Scylitzes in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid', *Gladius* v (1966). For the illustrations, see C. Estopañan, *Skyllitzes Matritensis* I (Barcelona-Madrid, 1965).

cavalry, light or heavy infantry). There is no reason to believe that these did not continue to be used and to evolve beyond the sixth century, from which the latest archaeological material derives.[29] Excavated shield-bosses were conical or domed, with a flanged base, often with an inscription naming the unit,[30] while spiked or semi-spiked bosses were not unusual[31] (figs. VI–3, VI–4 and VI–5).

The basics of heavy and light infantry equipment seem to have changed little during the period from the fifth to the early seventh century, except for the admission in the *Stratêgikon* that the majority of heavy infantry did not possess the more expensive mail armour used by those who made up the front rank of the line of battle. In contrast, the heavy and medium cavalry panoply shows marked steppe influence, as well as the influence of Sassanian cavalry tactics and arms. An early seventh-century bas-relief at Taq-i-Bustan in Iran shows the King of Kings Khusraw II in armour which was remarkably similar to that described for heavy cavalryman in the *Stratêgikon*, with the horse protected by a peytral of metal or leather lamellar armour. There is also a great deal of fragmentary archaeological and pictorial evidence to support the image described in the same source[32] (fig. VI–6).

The production of much of the defensive and offensive equipment for the East Roman forces in imperial arms factories must have assured a certain element of uniformity within and between units. On the other hand, many items such as helmets, shields or bows may also have been produced on the basis of government commissions to provincial craftsmen. This would have encouraged a certain amount of variation. Archaeological evidence from the fourth to the sixth centuries certainly suggests this, as does the fact that, independently of the state workshops, there were a number of private craftsmen in many cities producing bows and arrows, helmets, and even items of field artillery. In particular, it seems that frontier fortresses and cities maintained a small-scale arms production capability tailored to the needs of the permanent garrison units of the region in question.[33] But although some government-controlled arms-production continued after the middle of the seventh century, most production from this time onwards was carried out through commissions or compulsory levy by the *thematic* or provincial administration.

The later seventh, eighth and ninth centuries witnessed several developments in both the forms and appearance of armour and weaponry, and in fighting technique.[34] The nature of warfare changed substantially as the Empire's enemies changed. The lightly armed raiding parties who regularly devastated the eastern provinces in the seventh and eighth centuries were met by an increase in lightly armed cavalry recruited locally and often equipped at personal expense. Major set-piece battles were relatively few, although they still took place, and the

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[29] Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 149–51, 173; Dixon and Southern, *The Roman cavalry, op. cit.*, pp. 43–7.

[30] Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 172–3; D. Nicolle, 'No way overland? Evidence for Byzantine arms and armour on the 10th–11th century Taurus frontier', *Graeco-Arabica* vi (1995), pp. 226–45, at pp. 227–30; and Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *op. cit.*, figs. 158–60.

[31] H.W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunerts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire* (Munich, 1974), and M. Kazanski, 'Quelques parallèles entre l'armement en Occident et à Byzance', in *Gaule mérovingienne et monde méditerranéen* (Lattes, 1988), pp. 75–87. For some examples of spiked bosses, probably of east Germanic or Hun troops, see F. Vallet, 'Une implantation militaire aux portes de Dijon au Ve siècle', *L'armée romaine et les barbares*, eds. Vallet and Kazanski, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–58, at figs. 2/5 and 6; 3/2 and 14.

[32] Pope, ed., *A survey of Persian art, op. cit.*, vol. IV, pl. 161a; Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 22 and n. 56; 24–5.

[33] See the relevant chapters in J.F. Haldon, *Warfare, state and society in Byzantium 560–1204* (London, 1999); Bishop and Coulston, *Roman military equipment, op. cit.*, pp. 183–8.

[34] For the historical context and the changing strategic and tactical situation, see Haldon, *Warfare, state and society, op. cit.*, chaps. 2 and 3. On weaponry, see the discussion in Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 25–30, with sources; and the useful survey of evidence for Islamic weaponry and armour during the Umayyad period by Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *loc. cit.*

Empire retained a core of more heavily armed units, both in the provinces and around Constantinople itself.

Some of these changes may be reflected for mounted troops in the appearance of the single-edged sabre, which seems to be the meaning of the term *paramêrion* in tenth-century treatises. This was described as being slung from the waist and having the same length as the regular cavalry sword, or *spathion*.[35] The archaeological data is, however slender. One sabre from a Bulgarian site, probably of the later seventh century, plus several swords from excavated burials in regions north of the central Danube dating from the seventh to the tenth century, may be of Byzantine manufacture. In the case of the swords, these weapons were characterized by decorated bronze pommels and cross-guards which distinguished them from the types usually associated with the regions where they were found. Although their identity as Byzantine is not absolutely certain, the similarities between these weapons and comparable swords dated to the sixth to seventh centuries which were found at Corinth and Pergamon is suggestive, and it may be possible to begin establishing a concrete typology.[36]

There seems also to have been a greater use of felt and quilted defences, the latter in particular being a reflection of a general impoverishment in the levels of equipment of the *thematic* or provincial infantry and cavalry based in the *themata* or military districts, which have already been discussed. Thematic cavalry were protected by mail, lamellar or quilted armour, according to individual wealth and status. The waist-length *klibanion* of lamellar construction appears for the first time during this period, and was a standard item. It had probably been introduced by the steppe warriors with whom the Empire was in regular contact, whether as enemies or mercenaries or allies. Mail hauberks or *lorikia* which might, according to the pictorial and the tenth-century written evidence be either short or long, in which case they reached the knees, were also worn. A good example comes from the Bulgar capital of Serdica, and is dated to the tenth century.[37] Examples from the central Asian regions may well give a good idea of what Byzantine armour of this period looked like, and Byzantine pictorial

[35] For a possible parallel, see Nicolle, 'Arms of the Umayyad era', *op. cit.*, fig. 120 (a single-edged proto-sabre from the Altai, sixth-tenth centuries). For two-edged swords from the western steppe zone, see *ibid.*, figs. 126–129; whereas the Avar sabre seems to have been long and only slightly curved; see N. Fettich, 'Das Kunstgewerke der Awarenzeit in Ungarn', *Archaeologia Hungarica* i (1926), p. 14, fig. 12; Gy. Laszlo, 'Études archéologiques sur l'histoire de la société des Avares', *Archaeologia Hungarica* xxxiv (1955), pp. 228–9, 232–3 with pls. xlvi, li-liii. The shorter more strongly curved Turkic sabre appears from the later seventh to the ninth centuries, and is found in archaeological contexts neighbouring Byzantine territory. See esp. A. Zakharov and W. Arendt, 'Studia Levedica, 2: Türkische Säbel aus den vii-ix Jarhunderten', *Archaeologia Hungarica* xvi (1935), esp. pls. iii, vi, vii; and cf. also Gy. Fülöp, 'Awarenzeitliche Fürstenfunde von Igar', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* xl (1988), pp. 151–190, esp. p. 183, and figs. 14.1–6.

[36] For the sabre: J. Werner, *Der Grabfund von Malaja Pereščepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren. Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse*, neue Folge 91 (Munich 1984), pp. 25–7; M. Kazanski, J.-P. Sodini, 'Byzance et l'art "nomade". Remarques à propos de l'essai de J. Werner sur le dépôt de Malaja Pereščepina (Pereščepino)', *Revue archéologique* i (1987), pp. 71–90. For the swords, see A. Kiss, 'Frühmittel-alterliche byzantinische Schwerter im Karpatenbecken', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* xxxix (1987), pp. 193–210, at pp. 193–5, and catalogue at pp. 199–207.

[37] The evidence is slender. Some pictorial depictions in Psalters or on minor products such as ivory caskets and plaques show mounted soldiers with helmets, mail or scale shirts, swords and spears, but the detail is often very stylized. The *klibanion* appears in several examples: see A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X. – XIII. Jahrhunderts, I: Kästen* (Berlin, 1930), no. 32; S. Dufrenne, *L'Illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge* (Paris, 1966), miniatures in the Bristol Psalter: ff. 10r, 86r, 89r, 180v, 231v; in the Pantocrator Psalter: ff. 11v, 30v, 68v, 89r, 109r, 196r, 197v; from the Paris Psalter: ff. 17v, 18r. The Serdica mail coat, which is thigh-length with short sleeves, is housed in the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia. See D. Angelov *et al.*, *Istoriya na B'lgariya* (Sofia, 1981), p. 170. It is very similar to that depicted as worn by a mounted warrior on a jug from the treasure of Nagyszentmiklós in Hungary: N. Mavrodinov, 'Le trésor protobulgare de Nagyszentmiklós', *Archaeologia Hungarica* xxix (1943), pp. 120–1 and fig. 77; also those shown in the Byzantine manuscripts referred to above.

representations in illuminated manuscripts for example, showing soldiers with oval or round shields, conical helmets with points and aventails, mail or scale coats, straight swords and long lances, can be partially corroborated from such data[38] (figs. VI–7 and VI–8).

Corroborative archaeological data from the core Byzantine lands is almost entirely lacking, but valuable material from the periphery of the Empire can cast some light on developments. The evidence for swords and sabres has already been noted, but there are several sites in Italy which offer vital information for the period spanning the sixth and seventh centuries. Most important are those at the Crypta Balbi in Rome, the Romano-Lombard cemetery at Castel Trosino in the north-east, at S. Antonino di Perti in Liguria, and at Nocero Umbra north-west of Spoleto. The importance of the material from these sites, none of which is new, lies in recent reinterpretations of the cultural contexts in which the material is located. The Crypta Balbi excavations revealed a workshop or atelier securely located within the city of Rome, dating to the later sixth and seventh centuries, in which arms and armour were produced, some of them being luxury items. The extent to which this material was produced for 'export' to Lombard clients outside Roman territory remains debated, but it is likely that some of the items were intended for the local garrison and militia. The finds included fittings for sword scabbards and associated accoutrements, knives and scramasaxes, shield-bosses, arrow-heads of various types including three-flanged and leaf-shaped, and arrow shafts since traces of wood were found in the sockets of the arrow-heads, as well as items of armour. The latter included lamellae from body-armour and plates from helmets, unique in non-Lombard – in other words Romano-Byzantine – archaeological contexts.

The significance of this lies in the fact that the types of weapon and fitting produced in this essentially Romano-Byzantine workshop are familiar, but from the great majority of warrior-graves throughout the Lombard regions of Italy for the later sixth and early seventh century, not from a specifically Romano-Byzantine context. The conclusion must be that, in terms of style and technology, there can have been very little difference between the military equipment of a Lombard warrior in Italy and a regular Byzantine soldier.[39] This is borne out by the evidence from Castel Trosino. This was a fortified site in Lombard territory dating from the later sixth and seventh centuries, but lying close to Ravenna with easy access to the Adriatic on the one hand and the Ravenna–Rome route on the other. The evidence of the grave goods across the three main phases of development in this cemetery suggest the co-habitation of both a Lombard elite group and an indigenous Romano-Italian population. There also appears to have been a gradual assimilation of the two over a century or so, notably involving a gradual abandonment by the male Lombard population of military grave goods. Many of the items of weaponry and armour bear clear similarities to those produced in the Roman workshop of the Crypta Balbi, again illustrative of a commonality of much of this equipment.[40] This commonality again

[38] Belenitsky, *Central Asia, op. cit.*, pl. 137 and esp. pl. 110 (painted fragment of a shield from the fortress of Mug, near Pendzhikent in Tajikistan, showing a warrior wearing long lamellar coat with splinted arm-defences); other examples, on silverware and similar media, in M.I. Artamonov, *Istoriya Khazar* (Leningrad, 1962), esp. pp. 182, 210, 219; and further literature with examples cited in Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 27–9.

[39] M. Ricci, 'L'ergasterion altomedievale della Crypta Balbi in Roma', *Arti del fuoco in età longobarda*, eds. M.S. Arena and L. Paroli (Rome, 1994), pp. 19–22; and discussion by the same author, with further comparative literature: 'Relazioni culturali e scambi commerciali nell'Italia centrale romano-longobarda alla luce della Crypta Balbi in Roma', *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*. ed. L. Paroli (Firenze, 1997), pp. 239–73, esp. pp. 255–6 and fig. 5. The finds included also a half-finished archer's thumb-ring of bone, similar to those found in Avar tombs of the Hungarian plain: cf. E. Garam, 'Die Münzdatierten Gräber der Awarenzeit', *Awarenforschungen*, ed. F. Daim (Vienna, 1992), pp. 135–250, at p. 191 and pl. 19.

[40] The original excavation report was published in 1902, but has now been reprinted: see R. Mengarelli and G. Gabrielli, *La necropoli di Castel Trosino*, ed. G. Gagliardi (Ascoli Piceno, 1995). For the armaments, see F. Vallet, 'Une tombe de riche cavalier lombard découverte à Castel Trosino', in *La noblesse romaine et les chefs barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle* (Paris, 1995), pp. 335–49; M. Ricci, 'L'armamento dei longobardi in Italia', *La necropoli altomedievale di Castel Trosino. Bizantini e Longobardi nelle Marche*, ed. L. Paroli (Ascoli Piceno, 1995),

reappears at the strategically more important Lombard fortress site of Nocero Umbra near Spoleto.[41]

The shared characteristics of much of this equipment, and more importantly its possible 'Byzantine' origin, is borne out not only by the Crypta Balbi manufactory, but also by the site of a sixth to seventh-century 'Byzantine' garrison on the Ligurian coast at S. Antonino di Perti. Some of the metalwork from this excavation, which is similar in typology to the Crypta Balbi and Lombard material, and much of the ceramic evidence suggest that the fortress was supplied directly from the eastern Aegean regions by sea. Consequently, some of the buckles and other fittings, as well as the three- and four-flanged arrowheads recovered from the site, may well represent standard Byzantine patterns. It is notable that the three-flanged arrow-heads hitherto identified as being of 'Avar' type are found throughout, while a four-flanged type also occurs. This is identified by archaeologists as 'Byzantine' since it is rarely found in clearly Lombard contexts of the late sixth century.[42] Very large numbers of shield-bosses have also been recovered from these graves, some of them with clearly 'Byzantine' or 'Roman' decoration such as eagles and crosses.[43]

Given the dearth of material of this type from the central Byzantine lands, such evidence is especially important as an indicator of the development of weapons and armour on the one hand, and of the synthesis of military technologies which characterized this period. Even the data from sites in Asia Minor at which military actions are known to have occurred is, as yet, very limited and difficult to date. Only two iron arrow-heads, both of the leaf-shaped type, have, for example, been recovered to date from Byzantine Amorion. This was the military headquarters of an important army which was several times besieged, and captured at least twice by Arab-Islamic armies, in the period c.640–838.[44] Yet the material from Italy and the Balkans, as well as that from the Crimea, does provide a starting-point for the building up of typologies of different types of military equipment.

Archaeologists now have reasonably clear typologies for sword types, helmets and shield-bosses, quite apart from other military accoutrements such as belt-buckles and fibulae, spurs, stirrups and fittings for sword-belts, for the non-Roman warrior societies around the Roman borders. These peoples range from Lombards and Franks in the West to Avars and Khazars in the Balkans and south Russian steppe regions. Once artefacts from clearly Romano-Byzantine contexts can be isolated, it should be possible to fit them into the wider framework of which they undoubtedly formed an important element.[45]

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pp. 26–7; and the summary and discussion by L. Paroli, 'La necropoli di Castel Trosino: un laboratorio archeologico per lo studio dell'età longobarda', *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*, ed. Paroli, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–111.

[41] C. Rupp, 'La necropoli longobarda di Nocera Umbra: una sintesi', *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*, ed. Paroli, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–83 with literature.

[42] E. Bonora, C. Falcetti, *et al.*, 'Il "Castrum" tardo-antico di S. Antonino di Perti, Finale Ligure (Savona): fasi stratigrafiche e reperti dell'area D. Seconde notizie preliminari sulle campagne di scavo 1982–1987', *Archeologia Medievale* xv (1988), pp. 335–96, at p. 383, table XVIII.1–8, for three-flanged, lanceolate and barbed arrow heads; E. Castiglioni, G. Cupelli, *et al.*, 'Il "Castrum" tardo-antico di S. Antonino di Perti, Finale Ligure (Savona): terze notizie preliminari sulle campagne di scavo 1982–1991', *Archeologia Medievali* xix (1992), pp. 279–368, at p. 323, with table VIII.1–3, for three- and four-flanged arrow-heads of respectively 'Avar' and 'Byzantine' types. Cf. M. Incitti, 'La necropoli altomedievale della Selvicciola ad Ischia di Castro (VT) ed il territorio castrense in età longobarda', *L'Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda*, ed. Paroli, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–38, at 223–5 with n. 46 for comparative material.

[43] For example, the bosses from the Lombard graves from a site near Milan: A. Ceresa Mori, 'Boffalora d'Adda (Milano). Tombe longobarde', *Notiziario Soprintendenza archeologica della Lombardia* (1987), pp. 195–7.

[44] They were excavated from inside a possibly military enclosure in the lower city, and probably belong to the eighth or ninth century, but this remains to be determined. See C.S. Lightfoot, *et al.*, 'The Amorium project: the 1996 excavation season', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* lii (1998), pp. 323–36, at 328.

[45] See, for example, the useful survey of Lombard material from sites bordering Byzantine territories in northern Italy

The literary evidence for the later ninth and tenth centuries offers a good deal of information, but it brings several problems of interpretation with it. A long military treatise known as the *Tactica* of the Emperor Leo VI (886–912) contains much important information.[46] Since many of the details of weapons and equipment are copied almost verbatim from the earlier *Strategikon* of Maurice, however, it is difficult to know how reliable the account really is, although the writer makes an attempt to update his account in various places. The long coat of mail or quilted material described in the *Strategikon*, and copied by Leo as though still employed, is not mentioned in the more realistic and independent mid-tenth-century sources, except in the form of the *kabadion* worn by infantry or horse-archers.[47] On the other hand the pictorial evidence suggests that it had not fallen out of use, for several representations seem to depict such knee-length coats made of what may be either scale or lamellar. Indeed, the pictorial detail, which show the 'skirt' of this garment divided from the waist to hem for riding, corroborates the written accounts to some extent. Such armours appear in an eleventh-century Byzantine manuscript illumination, on wall-paintings or bas-reliefs in provincial chapels and churches of the tenth and eleventh centuries. They also appear in minor arts, on caskets, items of metalwork, or icons, for example[48] (figs. VI–9 to VI–11b).

Helmets were probably also standard. A helmet of tenth-century date, probably Byzantine or Bulgar, with the bowl forged from a single sheet and with riveted strengthening bands plus holes for the attachment of an aventail, has been excavated from a site in central Bulgaria. Archaeological evidence from the south Russian region and the northern Caucasus has revealed helmets of a slightly different style but similar construction, wrought from a single sheet, with a spike or fitting for a plume, similar to those described in the earlier *Strategikon* as well as in later

in M. De Marchi, 'Modelli insediativi "militarizzati" d'età longobarda in Lombardia', *Citta', castelli, campagne nei territori di frontiera (secoli VI–VII)*, ed. G.P. Brogiolo (Mantua, 1995), pp. 33–85, with extensive literature; and for the Cherson (Crimea) region, the short summary in S.B. Sorochan, V.M. Zubar' and L.V. Marchenko, *Zhisi' i Gibel' Khersonesa* (Kharkov, 2000), pp. 307–8.

[46]  *Leonis imperatoris tactica*, in: *Patrologia graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 107, 672–1120). A better edition, ed. R. Vári, *Leonis imperatoris tactica* I (proem., const. i-xi); II (const. xii-xiii, xiv, 1–38), *Sylloge Tacticorum Graecorum III* (Budapest, 1917–22) was unfortunately never completed, and the final sections are not included.

[47]  There are several contemporary and very 'actual' accounts of mid-tenth-century military organization, tactics and equipment, although the issue of archaisms must always be borne in mind when using their evidence. (I) The mid-tenth-century treatise known as the *Sylloge taktikôn*, ed. A. Dain, *Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim 'inedita Leonis Tactica' dicebatur* (Paris, 1938); (II) The treatise on skirmishing or guerilla tactics, written by a close associate of the Phokas clan, the family of the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), in the 950s or 960s: ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu, in: *Le traité sur la Guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)*, ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu, trad. and comm. G. Dagron (Paris, 1986), text pp. 28–135; Eng. trans. and edn., G.T. Dennis, in: *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, text, transl. and notes, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 25*. Dumbarton Oaks Texts 9 (Washington D.C., 1985), pp. 137–239, text pp. 144–238; (III) An anonymous treatise on campaign organisation, dating probably from the reign of John Tzimiskes or Basil II: *Incerti scriptoris Byzantini saec. X. Liber De Re Militari*, ed. R. Vári (Leipzig, 1901); Eng. trans. and edn.: *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, ed. and trans. G.T. Dennis, in: *Three Byzantine Military Treatises, op. cit.*, pp. 241–335 text, pp. 246–326; (IV) The so-called *Praecepta militaria* ascribed to Nicephorus II, ed. I. Kulakovskij, *Nicephori Praecepta militaria e codice Mosquensi. Zapiski Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk*, viii ser., 7 (1908), no. 9; and E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth. Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*. Dumbarton Oaks Studies, xxxiii (Washington D.C., 1995), pp. 3–59 text, pp. 61–78 notes; (V) The *Tactica* of the general Nikephoros Ouranos, chapters 56–65 of this treatise are now edited in McGeer, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–163 text, pp. 165–7 notes; chapters 63–74 are edited by J.-A. de Foucault, 'Douze chapitres inédits de la *Tactique* de Nicéphore Ouranos', *Travaux et Mémoires* v (1973), pp. 281–312. Of these, nos. (I) and (IV) provide the most up-to-date information, although (I) also includes much comparative material drawn from Roman/Hellenistic treatises and must be used with caution.

[48]  Ch. Diehl, *Peinture byzantine* (Paris, 1933), pl. lxxxii; Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, p. 35 and refs.; Kolias, *Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 55–7. For Central Asian parallels of the same period, see the important survey of Yu. S. Khudyanov, *Vooruzheniye Srednevekovikh Yuzhnoi Sibiri i Tsentralnoi Asii* (Novosibirsk, 1986), with illustrations; also the literature cited in notes 18 and 19 above.

texts[49] (figs. VI–12a-b and VI–13a-b). For those soldiers who did not possess a helmet, who were probably a substantial number, felt caps with neck-guards were employed instead. Such an item is reflected in the *kamelaukion* or cap of the eighth or ninth century from the northern Caucasus region. This was a leather cap covered in decorated silken fabric, with a neck-guard such as is described in the tenth-century treatises for the majority of infantry, although it may well also have served to cover a helmet.[50] The main weapons were the lance or spear and sword, complemented by the light cavalry shield. Bows and quivers on the Iranian pattern completed the armament. Light cavalry had less body-armour, and carried javelins or bows, or both.

The treatise known as the *Sylloge tacticorum*, dating to about the middle years of the tenth century, provides an account of some of the offensive and defensive equipment of imperial armies. Infantry wore quilted or lamellar body-armour, or mail, although those who could afford the more expensive mail or lamellar equipment may also have possessed horses and been classed among the mounted troops. The evidence suggests that, on the whole, foot soldiers were less well-outfitted than in the late Roman period. The majority of infantry, even the heavy infantry, had felt caps rather than metal helmets for example, and this must have been standard wear from the later seventh or eighth century onwards. It probably remained so until the eleventh century and after although there were certainly exceptions, especially among mercenary units recruited from foreigners whose panoply reflected their own cultural and martial traditions. Shields for the infantry, whether round or four- or three-cornered, were up to 1.4m in diameter (figs. VI–14 and VI–15). For lightly armed troops they were circular, about 0.8 m in diameter. For the cavalry they were circular; about 0.7 m in diameter for the light cavalry and up to 1m in diameter for the heavier troops.[51] Weapons included a heavy javelin or pike, the *menavlion*;[52] as well as various types of mace and axe which could be single-bladed, double-bladed or with blade and spike, along with the traditional sword, although not all heavy infantrymen carried the latter. The standard infantry spear in the mid- and late-tenth-century treatises seems to have been longer than during the earlier period, and probably reflects the enhanced status and battlefield role of heavy infantry at this time. Troops who had to stand firm against heavy cavalry presented a 'hedgehog' of such spears to repel the enemy.

The elite units of the imperial *tagmata* were much more heavily armoured. Indeed, it is likely that the *tagmata* elite units equipped and outfitted directly by the central government had, from their origins in the middle of the eighth century, been more heavily armed than the provincial *thematic* forces, and may have been issued with horse armour as well. But we have hardly any detailed information to supplement the meagre references of the literary sources. The mid-tenth-century heavy cavalryman is described in several sources, and was protected by a lamellar *klibanion* with splinted arm-guards, sleeves and gauntlets, the latter being made of coarse silk or quilted cotton. From the waist to the knee he wore thick felt coverings reinforced with mail. Over the *klibanion* was worn a sleeveless quilted or padded coat, the *epilorikon*, and to protect his head and neck there was an iron helmet with mail or quilting attached and wrapped around the face. The lower leg was protected by splinted greaves of bronze. Offensive weapons included

[49] Nicolle, *Medieval warfare Sourcebook, 2*, pp. 76–7; A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevnierusskoe Oruzhie* vol. 3 (Leningrad, 1971), esp. fig. 10.

[50] On the *kamelaukion*, which had a variety of meanings apart from that of a soldier's cap, see Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 85–7 with sources and literature.

[51] A mid-tenth-century treatise describes large, kite-shaped shields for heavy infantry, and it is entirely possible that it is from their contacts with Byzantine troops in Italy, or as mercenaries in the Byzantine armies elsewhere, that Western European cavalry and infantry began to adopt this type of shield, usually considered as an entirely Western European development especially associated with the Normans. See Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 33–4, and Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 105–8.

[52] The meaning of the word remains under discussion: see E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, 209–11 with further literature, who sees it as a very heavy pike used to resist cavalry; a different point of view is expressed by M.P. Anastasiadis, 'On handling the menavlion', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* xviii (1994), pp. 1–10.

iron maces with a three-, four- or six-flanged head, the *paramērion* and the standard sword, or *spathion*. The mace was a particularly favoured weapon for heavy cavalry and heavy infantry. The horses were also armoured; their heads, necks and front, flanks and rear being protected with felt quilting, hardened leather lamellar or scale armour, or hides.[53] In addition to this information, the so-called *Sylloge tacticorum* gives some details on the dimensions of the bow used by Byzantine soldiers. This, together with descriptions and illustrations of the curved Byzantine bows, suggests that the basic model remained that of the Hun bow which had been adopted in the fifth and sixth centuries, measuring from 1.1 to 1.2 m in length, with arrows of 0.7 m.[54] Central Asian evidence may again provide useful parallels. Khazar tumuli or *kurgan*s from the north-western Caspian region near Verkhnechiryurt have revealed several items of military equipment, including three-flanged and leaf-shaped arrow-heads, sabres, pieces of riveted lamellar, mail and straight swords. Since Khazar soldiers certainly served as mercenaries in Byzantine armies from the ninth century on, this sort of equipment may well have been commonplace on Byzantine territory too.[55]

Imperial troops strung their bows more or less tautly according to their role; for example, cavalry were instructed to string them less tautly for ease and speed of use while mounted. In addition, infantry soldiers may also have employed an arrow-guide, which was a channeled tube used to shoot short bolts at high velocity. This was certainly in use in the Islamic world after the seventh century. It first appears in the *Strategikon* of Maurice in the late sixth century and, according to the later Arab sources, was introduced from the steppe. As such it was another example of military technology from the Central Asian and Chinese sphere carried westward by the steppe peoples, probably the Avars again, and adopted by the East Romans.

That Byzantine troops were familiar with the hand-held crossbow, some evidence for which exists from the late Roman period, as opposed to the much larger frame- or swivel-mounted weapon used as field- or siege-artillery which certainly did continue in use, is unlikely. Why this should have been the case remains unclear, though perhaps it was a reflection of the conditions and nature of the fighting carried on by infantry in the period from the later fifth century onward. This weapon was certainly a novelty to the Byzantines when it appeared in the hands of western soldiers of the later eleventh century.[56]

Pictorial illustrations from the twelfth-century *Skylitzes* manuscript in the National Library in Madrid show cavalry of the ninth–eleventh centuries armed with mail, scale or lamellar armour, though the rather vague representations usually make it impossible to say which was intended, plus round or kite-shaped shields, plain round helmets, helmets with crests or tufts, or with aventails, straight swords, spears and maces. There are no illustrations of heavily armoured *cataphract* cavalry. The horses are throughout shown unarmoured, and it is likely that this represented the norm throughout the period in question. On the other hand, the manuscript certainly reflects contemporary, that is mid-twelfth-century, style and panoply and thus should be interpreted with caution.[57]

Many elements of Byzantine weaponry and defensive equipment can be found in

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[53] Detailed descriptions of these items can be found in Leo, *Tact.*, v, 3–4; vi, 1–8, 11, 25–27, 30, 32, 34; vii, 3; xiv, 84; xix, 57; *Syll. Tact.*, §38; 39; Niceph., *Praecepta*, i; iii; iv. See also Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, pp. 30–41; McGeer, *Sowing the dragon's teeth, op. cit.*, pp. 202–17.

[54] Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *op. cit.*, p. 39; Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 214–38.

[55] The flanges on the arrow-heads were extremely pronounced, and the heads were tanged, unlike the earlier Avar, Lombard and Byzantine arrow-heads which were socketed. See, for a summary of the material with further literature, M.G. Magomedov, *Obrazhovanie Khazarskogo Kaganata. Po materialam arkheologicheskikh issledovaniya i pis'mennim dannim* (Moscow, 1983), figs. 18, 19, 22.

[56] On all these issues, see Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 239–53, who surveys the discussion and recent literature on the subject, although he believes that the hand-held crossbow probably was used in Byzantium in the period from the seventh to the eleventh century.

[57] e.g. Estopañan, *Skyllitzes Matritensis, op. cit.*, I, figs. 11ff., 33f.

neighbouring as well as more distant cultural contexts, and illustrate the international milieu in which Byzantine military technology evolved. As noted already, the Avars appear to have adopted Byzantine types of spear or lance head, for example, while swords of possibly Byzantine origins dating from the sixth to the tenth century have been found north of the Danube.[58] Evidence for splinted leg- and arm-guards is found in contemporary Scandinavian archae-ological contexts as well as in both burials and representational art from regions such as Turkestan and Iran, Hungary and the south Russian steppe region. The use of knee-length lamellar or quilted coats, mail and scale defences, as well as neck- and face-guards for helmets similar to those described in the *Praecepta*, is also attested from similar sources.

Yet while Byzantine military technology was part of a continuum, sharing to a greater or lesser extent the production techniques and forms of a broader Eurasian technology of fighting, it demonstrated some entirely indigenous particularities in style or technique. Thus, one variation on the *klibanion* may have been a purely Byzantine technical development, namely the use of a type of banded-lamellar construction which afforded both more protection and more flexibility than the traditional, relatively solid forms, introduced probably from the later tenth or eleventh century.[59] We know very little about the details, however. Good typologies for Avar swords and hilts, scabbards, bows and related accoutrements are beginning to be established for the middle of the sixth to later seventh century, and these will undoubtedly be important in establishing firmer data for the Byzantine material. It may also be possible to build up a better idea of the types and development of Byzantine helmets and shields, using both Balkan and Islamic materials as a comparative starting point.

There is no reason to doubt that Byzantine weaponry possessed its own individual traditions in respect of style, fabrication and decoration. Descriptions in the military treatises, for example of uniform unit colours for shields, pennons and so forth, for tufts or crests on helmets or other accoutrements, or for the length of spear- and lance-heads, arrows and arrow-heads, can give some indication of this. But few specific examples have been firmly identified.[60] No doubt further careful work in archaeological collections and museums in the south Balkans and in Turkey as well as the Middle East will help to improve on this situation, but a great deal of work remains to be done. It is fair to conclude that, even with the help of the sometimes unusually detailed written descriptions of late Roman-early Byzantine arms and armour, we still have only a very limited understanding of many aspects of the subject, both from the point of view of technology and production techniques, as well as from that of style and form.

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[58] Von Freeden, 'Awarische Funde in Süddeutschland?' *op. cit.*, n. 22 above.

[59] On the *klibanion* and its appearance, see Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, op. cit.*, pp. 44–49; Dawson, '*Kremasmata, kabadion, klibanion*: some aspects of middle Byzantine military equipment reconsidered', *loc. cit.* Banded lamellars are depicted on the eighth- or ninth-century shield fragment from Pendzhikent, see Belenitsky, *Central Asia, op. cit.*, pl. 110; and in paintings of the ninth or tenth century from Tun Huang in Turkestan, see A. Stein, *Serindia: report of explorations in central Asia and westernmost China V* (Oxford, 1921), pl. lxxiii.

[60] For a detailed presentation of the evidence from these non-Byzantine contexts, esp. Central Asian pictorial sources, see the discussion and literature in Haldon, 'Byzantine military technology', *loc. cit.*; Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen, loc.cit.*; Nicolle, 'No way overland?', *loc. cit.* See also A. Bruhn-Hoffmeyer, 'Military equipment in the Byzantine manuscript of Scylitzes in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid', *Gladius* v (1966), *loc. cit.*

# [18]

## Suntagma Hoplôn: The Equipment of Regular Byzantine Troops, c.950 to c.1204

TIM DAWSON

AT THE DEBUT of the tenth century, after two hundred years of assaults from external enemies and a debilitating internal schism over theology, the Byzantine eagle was again on the wing. The Roman army had always been ready to adapt to changing circumstances, and the previous centuries had demanded much of that capability, although less due to a different character of external threat than to the perennial problems of finance and supply. However by c.900 recovery was under way and there was also a revival of the ancient Roman tradition of military literature, as well as greater confidence to specify optimum forms of equipment at a sophisticated level. The recommendations of the mid-tenth-century manuals set paradigms which prevailed for many years.

It is noteworthy that the authorities concerned with the army in the tenth century were by no means ready to discount past lessons. The *Strategikon,* commonly attributed to Emperor Maurice, may well have been copied as often in the tenth and eleventh centuries as it was around the time of its original composition at the beginning of the seventh century.[1] Certainly it was still deemed to have important advice. It seems probable that a significant amount of what was given in the *Strategikon* continued to be taken as read in the tenth century.

The pre-eminent new work of the tenth century is the so-called *Praecepta Militaria* attributed to Emperor Nikephoros Phokas, compiled around 965.[2] The *Strategikon* had been written shortly after the introduction of stirrups and it treats the cavalry as the elite wing of the army, with infantry being dealt with as a single chapter addendum. In the *Praecepta* the balance is redressed and the co-ordination between the two arms has been refined to high degree, very much reminiscent of Western Europe in the Renaissance.[3] This had led to a renewed emphasis on quality and comprehensiveness in infantry arms and armour.

The basic General Issue armour of an infantryman according to the *Praecepta Militaria* was a heavy, padded *kavadion* falling to the knees and a thick felt cap with a turban wrapped over the top (fig. VII–4).[4] The term, *kavadion,* has often been mis-interpreted in the past.[5] It was a

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[1] G.T. Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon* (Pennsylvania, 1984), p. xviii. This English translation is defective in places. G. Dennis has also published a edition of the Greek text with a parallel translation into German by E. Gamillscheg; *Das Strategikon des Maurikios* (Vienna, 1981).

[2] The most accessible edition is contained in E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth* (Washington, 1995), however the parallel English translation of some technical terms can be criticized.

[3] E. McGeer, 'Infantry versus Cavalry: The Byzantine Response', *Revue des Études Byzantines* xlvi (1988), pp. 135–45.

[4] Praecepta Militaria, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.,* I.16–32.

[5] J.F. Haldon, 'Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* i (1975), p. 36; McGeer, *Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.,* p. 13.

Hellenized version of the Persian *kaftan*, meaning 'divided',[6] which supplanted the long employed Greek equivalent, *diakoptês*.[7] This garment was in fact a coat opening straight down the front, by this era fastened with buttons and loops. Such coats had a venerable history in Persia, and were already standard wear in parts of the Roman Empire by the sixth century.[8] Late Sassanian *kavadia* were often double-breasted, with the outer edge running down from the left side of the neck.[9] This pattern endured for centuries afterwards, and makes very good practical sense for the infantry's *kavadia*, since it forestalls the possibility of a vulnerable gap that a single-breasted coat would allow. The infantry's *kavadia* were to be made of coarse silk padded with cotton as thick as may be stitched. Numerous Byzantine pictorial sources accurately depict quilting patterns (fig. VII–1).

Type A, B and C are those commonly used on *kavadia* and *zoupai*, the lighter, waist or hip length jackets rarely mentioned in military literature but regularly appearing in art.[10] The staggered and curved cross-quilts on a vertical base have the practical justification of minimizing the length over which cuts may coincide with the thinner or compressed material of stitching. The diamond quilting pattern (D and variants) was employed on parade armours,[11] and smaller, less vulnerable pieces such as *kampotouba*.

Such dense quilting produces a garment that is heavy and quite stiff, so to reduce the encumbrance the soldiers were to put their arms through slits in the armpits of the coats and fold the sleeves back to the shoulders where they were secured with buttons. The sleeves and body of the *kavadia* are described in the *Praecepta* as being 'short', possibly giving the impression that they may have been only elbow length. However, this use of the word 'short' must be understood in contrast to the normal clothing worn by men of the same social class of the author of the text and indeed of his readership. The standard garment of men of court and officer rank was a tunic or coat falling to the ankles, with sleeves considerably longer than the wearer's arms, most familiarly illustrated in the court scenes of the Madrid *Skylitzes*. Thus, the sleeves of the military *kavadia* were a familiar wrist length, and the coats could be worn in the usual manner when used for their secondary function as a protection from bad weather.

The *Strategikon* recommends that selected infantry have mail shirts and helmets where possible. The combination of padded coat and turban, being easier and cheaper to produce and so, we may assume, in more general supply, was a definite advance on the unprotected state of the remainder of the troops at the time of the composition of the *Strategikon*. Nevertheless it is

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[6] F.A. Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* (London, 1892), p. 1037.

[7] I.I. Reiske, ed., *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1839), p. 582, line 13.

[8] See V. Gervers-Molnar, *The Hungarian Szür: an Archaic Mantle of Eurasian Origin* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 5ff, for a survey of the ancient sources. See D. Bénazeth, and P. Dal-pra, 'Quelques remarkes à propos d'un ensemble de vetements de cavaliers découverts dans tombes égyptiennes', *L'Armée Romaine et Barbares du troiseme au quatrieme siecle* (Saint-Germain-en-laye, 1993), pp. 367–77 for details of some of the surviving examples found in late Roman cemeteries of Egypt. See T. Dawson, 'Kremasmata, Kabbadion, Klibanion: Some aspects of middle Byzantine military equipment reconsidered', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* xxii (1998), pp. 39–42, for a more comprehensive explanation of the identification of this garment.

[9] Shown on the relief of Shah Khusrau II hunting in the grotto of Taq-i-Bustan in Iran.

[10] Writing in the mid-tenth century, Achmet gives a highly informative commentary on the *zoupa* in civilian use; F. Drexl, ed., *Achmetis Oneirocríticon* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 117. The best depictions of military *zoupai* occur on a tenth-century ivory casket in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (inv. A.542–1910; See H.W. Haussig, *A History of Byzantine Civilization* [New York, 1971] pl. 71) and another in the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (inv. 1884.44.11; See David Nicolle, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era* [White Plains, 1988], vol. i, p. 37, vol. ii, p. 649, figs. 82A-B and 83B). They also appear sporadically in the Madrid *Skylitzes*.

[11] Such as the *rhodovotrun*, the red *epilôrikion* quilted with gold thread and decorated with pearls worn by Emperors during triumphal parades; J.F. Haldon, ed. and trans., *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions* (Vienna, 1990), p. 148 (Greek) and p. 149 (English). A highly stylized depiction of the application of this quilting pattern to a *thôrax* can be seen on an eleventh century icon of St Demetrios; See Ian Heath, *Byzantine Armies: 886–1118* (London, 1989), p. 9.

also highly likely that, where logistics and finances allowed, heavier armour would have been made available to infantry as well as cavalry. Perhaps this might have occurred when the production of equipment outstripped the supply of trained cavalrymen.

In a dense infantry formation behind a wall of shields, the legs tend to be at less risk. Nevertheless the *Praecepta* does recommend some protection in the form of thigh boots, which are to be folded down below the knee to facilitate mobility on the march. (fig. VII–5.)[12] Padded leggings, *kampotouba* or simply *toubia*, are not mentioned, but this is probably because they were such common wear for a Byzantine man of the tenth century that, like most other garments, they needed no mention. This is indicated by the *Oneiromancer* of Achmet which probably dates from around the tenth century.[13] Here the *toubia* is described as being made of, and padded with, wool and silk.[14] The soldier in figure VII–4 wears *kampotouba* and the shorter type of boot probably known as *mouzakia*, which is given as one alternative to the thigh boots previously mentioned.[15] The third footwear alternative that the *Praecepta* recommends are *tzerboulia*, which are described elsewhere as 'slavish (or perhaps 'servant's') footwear'.[16] It has been suggested that this was a form of latch-shoe,[17] but might just as readily be any of the diverse forms of low shoe known from late antique archaeology,[18] and corroborated in middle Byzantine art.

The primary protection of any common infantryman of this era was, of course, his shield. The precise form of shields is never stated in the *Praecepta Militaria*, but it is generally accepted that the stipulations of the approximately contemporaneous *Sylloge Tacticorum* may be taken to apply, and the standard infantry shield was a kite or tear-drop shape.[19] The *Praecepta* says that the shields of the foot soldiers are to be 'no less than six *spithamai*', or about 72 cm[20] and

[12] The construction of these boots is based mainly upon a very detailed eleventh-century soapstone icon of Saint Theodore Stratelates (Museo Sacro, Vatican, no. 982); H. Evans and W.D. Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium – Art and Culture of the Byzantine Era*, AD 843–1261 (New York, 1997), pp. 157ff. Several similar pieces also show accurate constructional details of slightly different styles on boots; for example on two early eleventh-century repoussée icons of Saint George from Labdechina and Saakao (Shalva Amirashvili, *Georgian Metalwork* [London, 1971], pp. 72–3), another such eleventh-century icon held in the Mestia Museum (A. Alpago-Novello *et al.*, *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia* [Louvain, 1980], p. 58) and the centurion on a twelfth-century soapstone crucifixion in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (inv. w-31; Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, p. 159).

[13] Achmet's dates are unknown, but S.M. Oberhelman places the author between 813 and 1075, with the tenth century the most probable; S.M. Oberhelman, 'Oneirocritic literature of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods' (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Minnesota 1981), p. 64; S.M. Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet* (Lubbock, 1991), pp. 13ff.

[14] Drexl, *Oneirocriticon, op. cit.*, p. 198.

[15] McGeer translates the phrase '*sandalia egoun mouzakia*' ('*sandalia*, that is *mouzakia*') without sufficient consideration of other sources of this period. Achmet's extensive discussion indicates that in the tenth century *sandalia* does not mean anything comparable to the sandals in the modern sense; Drexl, *op. cit.*, p. 178. Nor should it be taken as necessarily 'a peasant's shoe', which is a description much more convincingly to be applied to *tzerboulia*; McGeer, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[16] De Administrando Imperio, Section 32 line 13, '*ta doulika hypodēmata*' G. Moravsick, ed. and R.J.H. Jenkins, trans., *De Administrando Imperio* (Washington, 1967), p. 152.

[17] A.E. Sophocles, *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (New York, undated), pp. 180 and 984. Sophocles offers no citations or argument for this suggestion.

[18] H. Frauberger, *Antike und Früh-mittelalterlich Fußbekleidungen von Achmim-Panopolis* (Düsseldorf, 1895), especially plate XIV for typical shoes.

[19] Haldon, 'Military Technology . . .', *op. cit.*, p. 34

[20] It has been acknowledged that there is a distinct problem with the interpretation of this unit of measurement (McGeer, *op. cit.*, p. 63). The conversion of *spithamē* established by Schilbach of 23.4 cm (E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie* [Munich, 1970], pp. 19–23) gives 140 cm for 6 *spithamai* which would be feasible as a *maximum* size for a shield, but not a minimum, because anything much larger is impossibly unwieldy. Similarly, 23.4 cm per *spithamē* converts to patently absurd lengths of 5.8 to 7 metres for the infantry spears. All the measurements given in the *Praecepta Militaria* can be converted to entirely practical dimensions if Schilbach's figure errs by a factor of two, and a *spithamē* is actually about 12 centimetres. This conclusion will be applied throughout this article.

preferably more. Pictorial sources occasionally show the inside of shields.[21] All those that do, show a pair of rope loops spliced through ring mounts (fig. VII–13). This is a very functional arrangement for both round and long shields, which serves not only as a grip, but, when combined with a shoulder-strap, takes the arm threaded through. Thus the left hand remains free to hold the reins (fig. VII–6) or to manipulate a spear two-handed.

It is noteworthy that these troops are not only to be well armoured by the standards of the time, but also very well armed. In addition to spears between 3 and 3.6 metres in length, each soldier is to have a sword hung from a belt, or else a *paramerion* according to the *Sylloge Tacticorum*[22] (fig. VII–8[23]) and an axe or a mace. The double-bladed axe shown in figure VII–4 is the type that went by the name of *tzikourion*,[24] while the other common type with a single blade and either a hammer or pick at the back was called a *distralion*.[25] One in ten of the infantry are to substitute their spears with a *menaulion*.[26] This was a heavier type of spear, about the same length as the standard spear but much thicker, preferably made of an entire sapling and fitted with a larger head.[27] These larger spears were interspersed in the front rank to repel cavalry charges. The standard spear, being light enough to be used in a stabbing, or even quasi-fencing manner, was vulnerable to being broken by the impact of charging horsemen so the thick *menaulion*, almost certainly used like a pike with a grounded butt in a fashion employed for many centuries, was to break the impetus of the charge. The other troops then used their weapons to kill surviving riders.[28] This combination of armament provided an extremely adaptable and effective formation, capable of flexible response both at variable range and against various troop and armour types amongst the opposition.

The *Praecepta* defines the cavalry arms as operating in three classes: *kataphraktoi*, *prokoursatores* and archers. The *kataphraktoi* were the most heavily armoured troops in the army. Their helms were fitted with a complete aventail of mail two or three layers thick, pierced only with eye-holes.[29] This was a style long known in the east,[30] but was quite unlike the equivalent gear described in the *Strategikon*.[31] The torso was protected by a *klibanion* of lamellar armour.[32] In this period Byzantine armourers had introduced a technological

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[21] A late example (early thirteenth century) preserving earlier models is held in the Byzantine Museum, Athens in the form of a wall-painting from the Church of the Dormition, Episkopi; Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[22] These two types of sword have sometimes been confused. Here the use of the term *spathion*, in *spathion zôstikion*, is significant. Straight swords hung from a belt are notable as a Persian practice going back into antiquity (P. Oliver Harper, *The Royal Hunter* [New York, 1978], for numerous examples in Sassanian silverware) and were almost ubiquitous by this period. In contrast, one pictorial source in particular resolves the form of the *paramerion*. It is an eleventh-century portrait of the supposed author of the *Praecepta Militaria*, Nikephoros Phokas, in which he is shown with a bared *paramerion* sloped on his shoulder. He holds the scabbard before him with what is unmistakably a cord baldric with metal terminals draped over his arm.

[23] It should be noted that the *paramerion* shown out of its scabbard in this figure is one for display combat and is therefore blunt, whereas in reality it would be sharply pointed.

[24] The word evolved from the Latin *securis*. *Securis* was originally noted as being synonymous with *bipennis*, a double bladed axe (C.T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* [Oxford, 1980], p. 950; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 1722), both refering to the magisterial *fasces*.

[25] From Latin *dextralis*. H.G. Liddel and R. Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon* [Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1869], p. 437. The Greek *Chronicon Cassinense* explicitly explains *dextralis* as an 'axe of only one part' (*axinê enos meros*). Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimiae Latinitatis* (Paris, 1688; reprinted Graz, 1954), vol. iii, p. 92.

[26] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, *op. cit.*, I. 83–4.

[27] *Ibid.*, 119–124

[28] *Ibid.*, 115–119. The suggestion that the *menaulion* was a variety of javelin flies in the face of the evidence. Micheal P. Anastasiadis, 'On handling the menaulion', *Byzantine and Medieval Greek Studies* xviii (1994), pp. 1–10.

[29] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, *op. cit.*, III. 34–37

[30] e.g., on the relief of Shah Khusrau II as a mounted warrior in the grotto of Taq-i-Bustan in Iran.

[31] *Strategikon*, *op. cit.*, bk. VII, ch. 15 and bk. X, ch. 1, which describe the troops wearing mail coifs under their helms.

[32] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, *op. cit.*, III .26ff

innovation in lamellar construction. In the generic lamellar armour used since antiquity and surviving long after our period in some other cultures, the plates overlap and are tied together horizontally before the rows are assembled vertically.[33] The new method did not tie the plates to each other, but instead attached them side by side to leather backing. Figure VII–2 shows the construction of typical late tenth-century lamellar.[34] Here the outer laces tie the plates to the backing, while the inner laces suspend the row below.

This construction explains the universal characteristics shown on middle Byzantine illustrations of lamellar where the full face of each plate is visible, and usually with a plain band separating the rows.[35] This method of assembly makes both construction and maintenance easier, as well as saving material and weight, without significantly reducing protection. Having a flexible structure of two spaced layers such lamellar was not only highly effective in resisting cuts, but was also largely proof against impacts, whether from arrows or the lances of other cavalry. An anecdote recounted by Anna Comnena about her father Alexios illustrates this. At the battle of Dyrrachion, Alexios was assailed from one side by three Normans who drove their lances at him. The weapons failed to penetrate his armour, but partly unseated him from his saddle. At that point another party of Normans attacked him from the other side, their spears merely pushing back onto his saddle. Thereupon Alexios galloped away unscathed but with some of the Normans' weapons still entangled in his *epilôrikion*.[36]

The *klibania* were fitted with elbow length sleeves, which artwork indicates were made of splints.[37] Iron was the preferred material for the *klibanion* and its sleeves, but horn or leather, probably in the form of hardened cuir bouilli, might be used for the lames, and wood or leather for the splints if iron was scarce. Over their *klibania* the *kataphraktoi* were to wear surcoats, or *epilôrikia*, which are described in precisely the same terms as the infantry's *kavadia*, even down to the arrangement of the sleeves. Forearms and thighs were protected by *manikelia* and *kremasmata* respectively. The *Praecepta* explains that these are padded pieces made in precisely the same way as the infantry's *kavadia*, that is 'silk wadded with cotton as thick as may be stitched', and faced with mail. We can see an analogy to this arrangement in the partially mail-faced arming doublets employed in Europe in the late fourteenth to sixteenth centuries to protect the gaps in plate armour harness.[38] A round shield and splinted greaves completed the panoply of a *kataphraktos*. Going unmentioned here, but again probably carried over as a standard item from the *Strategikon*, are gauntlets, most likely mailed mittens.[39]

The heavy armament seen with the infantry is taken still further with the heavy cavalry, with each man carrying both a *spathion* and a *paramerion* as well as several maces.[40] The discussion of maces in the *Praecepta Militaria* appears at first glance confusingly repetitive. The basic term used is *sideroravdion*, 'iron staff', yet the author then goes on to recommend that these have 'all-iron heads' with three to six corners.[41] The revised text in the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos

[33] A simplified diagram of this sort of lamellar construction can be found in Heath, *Byzantine Armies, op. cit.*, p. 8.

[34] From the portrait of Prôtospatharios Iovannes in the *Adrianople Gospels*, in the Monastery of San Lazzaro, Venice (Ms. 887/116, f. 8r; Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, p. 357).

[35] For more on this see Dawson, 'Kremasmata, Kabbadion, Klibanion . . .', *op. cit.*, pp. 42–5.

[36] Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* Book 4.vii. Tests on reconstructed armour done with both spears and arrows confirm its effectiveness. The arrows were fitted with the tanged conical heads common at this time and shot at medium range from a composite bow drawing to 82 pounds.

[37] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.*, III. 27. Haldon, 'Military Technology. . . .', *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[38] The *kazaghand* form of body armour used in the medieval Islamic world was made in the same manner and may provide an even more direct analogy although, unlike the padded Byzantine mail armours, the *kazaghand* was also covered in decorative fabric.

[39] Bk. 1, ch 2; Dennis, *Maurice's Strategikon, op. cit.*, p. 12; Dennis, *Das Strategikon, op. cit.*, p 78.

[40] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.*, III. 53–60.

[41] *Ibid.*, 52–56.

dispenses with the compound and refers to *ravdia holosidera*, 'all-iron staves, with multi-cornered heads'.[42] This significantly clarifies the meaning and directs our attention to a term in another tenth-century text, namely the *spathovaklion* or 'sword-staff'.[43] This might suggest a pole-arm. The Varangian *rhomphaia* was once believed to be such a weapon,[44] but there is no evidence for a weapon of that type in any Byzantine source, whether literary or pictorial. A better interpretation is to conclude that *spathovaklion* explains details of the form of the *holosideron ravdion*. It could, for example, indicate that the shaft as well as the head is made of iron and that it has sword-like characteristics, that is something resembling a guard and pommel as is well known in late-medieval and Renaissance European use.[45] This was, of course, an expensive ideal, and wooden shafted maces doubtless remained more common. This multiplicity of weaponry should not be surprising given the impossibility of a horseman recovering a lost weapon in the way that a foot soldier could easily do. The mounts of the *kataphraktoi* were also to be armoured, either in all encompassing, knee length bards or horse-armours of felt or hardened leather, or else of ox-hide lamellar covering only the horse's chest.[46]

*Prokoursatores* were medium cavalry employed for skirmishing and pursuit[47] (figs. VII–6 and VII–7).[48] These were to be clad in a helm and a *klibanion* alone, that is the torso-covering cuirass without any limb pieces, or else wearing a *lôrikion*. From antiquity this term meant a mail shirt, and continued to do so throughout the life of the Byzantine Empire. However in the *Taktika*, Leo writes of *lôrikia* made of horn or hardened leather when mail was not available. Haldon infers that these *lôrikia* are therefore lamellar,[49] yet this conclusion conflicts with the fact that Leo also writes of *klibania* of iron and horn. The sources also draw an explicit distinction between *lôrikion* and *klibanion*. A rather more likely conclusion is that *lôrikion* may also refer to one of the most ancient and ubiquitous defences; namely a shirt of scale construction.[50] There are strong practical reasons for regarding mail and scale as comparable. Both are made of many small, identical components. Properly constructed, a scale shirt can be made with many of the characteristics of a mail shirt, even down to sleeves and skirts of any length, and will be almost as flexible.[51] Numerous Byzantine works of art across our period show armours which may be mail, but could just as easily indicate scale. More definitely, the wall-paintings of the 'Dovecote Church' at Çavusin in Cappadocia, painted at almost exactly the same time as the writing of the *Praecepta Militaria*, show comprehensive scale shirts on both infantrymen and riders.[52] An icon of Saints Sergios and Bacchos in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai shows them riding in short-sleeved, thigh-length scale shirts rendered with exquisite precision.

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[42] *Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos*, 60.67–8; McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.*, p. 114.

[43] *De Cerimoniis*, p. 72, line 18; p. 82 lines 4 and 10, p. 100 line 23 and numerous other places.

[44] I. Heath, *Armies of the Dark Ages* (London, 1980), p. 73; I. Heath, *Byzantine Armies, op. cit.*, p. 38. For a comprehensive refutation see T. Dawson, 'The Varangian Rhomphaia: A Cautionary Tale', *Varangian Voice*, no. 22 (May 1992), pp. 28–31.

[45] A.V.B. Norman, *Arms and Armour* (London, 1970), p. 118.

[46] *Praecepta Militaria*, in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.*, III. 37–45.

[47] *Ibid.*, II. 20–24.

[48] The saddlery used in these pictures is modern, although it is less different from Byzantine equipment than it is from that of medieval Europe. The Byzantines did not begin to use Western European style saddles with a high pommel and cantle until late in the twelfth century, and they never completely supplanted the lower Near Eastern type of saddle.

[49] Haldon, 'Military Technology . . .', *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[50] See B. Thordeman, *Armour from the Battle of Wisby* (Stockholm, 1939), pp. 243–8 for a wide selection of scales from all over the Eurasian continent. Some of the plates Thordeman classifies as lamellae are, however, more likely to be scales.

[51] Haldon unfortunately misconceives the effect of scale construction in this respect; 'Military Technology . . .', *op. cit.*, p. 13, n. 8.

[52] Nicolle, *Arms and Armour . . ., op. cit.*, pp. 646–8

The type of helmet worn by the *prokoursatôr* in figures VII–6 and VII–7 is extremely well known from Caucasian graves of the tenth and eleventh centuries.[53] Scattered pictorial sources indicate that these and other eastern types were increasingly coming into Byzantine use from this time.[54]

The mounted archers had very similar equipment to the *prokoursatores*; namely a helm and *klibanion* (figs. VII–8 and VII–9). This helm shown in these figures clearly evolved from well known types of the late Roman era, such as those found at Intercisa and elsewhere.[55] The neck-guard is based upon common representations of this period. They are usually assumed to be leather *pteruges* or scales,[56] yet the patterning strongly resembles the quilting discussed above. A quilted piece would give significantly greater protection than strips or scales of leather, and would certainly be more in keeping with the practices described in our sources. Further support for this can be found in a wall-painting of Joshua and his followers in the Church of Saint George Diasoritis at Naxos. Although this wall-painting is attributed to the late twelfth century, one soldier wears a helmet of a type frequently illustrated over the previous two centuries. Most unusually, he is shown full face with the neck-guard of his helm distinctly thick and flaring out as a quilted hanging would do.

Under their *klibania* the archers were to wear *kavadia* to protect their legs and part of their horses. The Greek of *Praecepta Militaria* is a little curious at this point, and has confused past authors. The phrase, '*eis de tas zônas autôn phoreitôsan hoi kabadia*', 'the archers shall wear *kavadia* in (or 'within') their belts' led Kolias, and McGeer following him,[57] to imagine these were a skirt, despite the fact that there was a distinct and clear term for armoured skirts; namely the *kremasmata* of the *kataphraktoi*. In fact, the description of the archers' *kavadia* elucidates their form quite precisely, since there is a pattern surviving in close temporal and geographical proximity to our source, and which behaves in the manner described in the *Praecepta Militaria*. An eighth- or ninth-century grave at Moshchevaya Balka in the Caucasus yielded a largely complete coat clearly related to Persian styles of late Antiquity. Its skirt is divided on each side towards the rear.[58] This forms three panels, two at the front which fall down a rider's legs, and a third which would lie along his horse's rump. In practice this is the only manner in which the desired effect may be gained, for a full skirt with sufficient spread to cover both the rider's legs and the horse's rump would be an impossible encumbrance if it was made of heavy padded material. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is reasonable to surmise that the *epilôrikia* of the *kataphraktoi* had the same form as the archers' *kavadia* in order to give their mounts more protection, especially if they were only equipped with lamellar breast-pieces. Furthermore, the

[53] A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Drevierusskoe Orujie, III* (Lenningrad, 1971), pl. 10 and elsewhere.

[54] British Library (Ms. Add. 19352, f. 7; Nicolle, *Arms and Armour. . . ., op. cit.*, p. 653, fig. 98B); Vatican Library, Ms. Gr. 746 f. 61v, Rome).

[55] M.C. Bishop and J.C.N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (London, 1993), pp. 167–72 and fig. 122. Such helms are most familiarly found in the Madrid *Skylitzes* of c.1130. The eleventh-century *Book of Kings* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Gr. 333, Paris) appears to be an example of the variety of manuscript from which the Madrid *Skylitzes* was copied, having many similar details (see J. Lassus, *L'Illustration du livre des Rois: Vat. Gr. 333* [Paris, 1973]). Pioneering work was done on the reconstruction of this style of helmet by S. Lowe, 'A Byzantine style helmet Based upon the Skylitzes Chronicle of Madrid', *Varangian Voice* no. 32, August 1994, pp. 7–10.

[56] See, e.g. the plates in Heath, *Byzantine Armies . . ., loc. cit.*

[57] Kolias, *Waffen . . ., op. cit.*, pp. 47 and 54, and McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth, op. cit.*, p. 37.

[58] A pattern diagram is given in A. Jeroussalimskaja, 'Le cafetan aux simourghs du tombeau de Mochtchevaja Balka (Caucase Septentrional)', *Studia Iranica*, vii (1978), pp. 183–211, and the same author (but spelt Ierusalimskaja), *Die Gräber der Mochtchevaja Balka* (München, 1996), p. 158. Several other publications deal with this and similar garments from the same site without fully describing the pattern: A. Ierusalimskaja, and B. Borkopp, *Von China nach Byzanz* (München, 1996), pp. 18ff; K. Riboud, 'A Newly Excavated Caftan from the Northern Caucasus', *Textile Museum Journal* ii/3 (1976), pp. 21–42. Compare several late Antique versions in M. Tilke, *Costume Patterns and Designs* (London, 1956), pl. 5.

similarity between the description of the *epilôrikia* and the coats of the infantry points toward the possibility that those *kavadia* are also made to the same pattern. Having one standard pattern for the coats and the *epilôrikia* would certainly have major logistical advantages in supply and distribution. Figure VII–3 shows the pattern of the *kavadia*. Here the more solid lines show the simplest method of construction, while the lighter dotted lines indicate a construction close to that of the Moshchevaya Balka *kaftan*. This reconstruction includes a collar because they were found on other coats from other graves at Moshchevaya Balka.[59] Collared garments are mentioned in other examples of tenth-century literature[60] and it makes good practical sense to have that area protected.

The *Praecepta Militaria* say nothing of the primary armament of the horse archers. The *Sylloge Tacticorum* states that horse archers carried a bow of fifteen or sixteen *palaistai* (1.17 or 1.25 metres) in length but of significantly less power than those of the infantry.[61] Unfortunately, archery equipment is rarely depicted in Byzantine art, and much uncertainty must remain as to the particular forms of such gear in this period. The *Strategikon* already speaks of bow-cases to contain the bow when already strung and it seems that these were beginning to supplant bow-cases for unstrung bows amongst the horse archers of that era.[62] An early surviving example was found in the same Caucasian grave as the *kavadion* discussed above. Its form is the near-triangular shape which was very widespread in the region over a long period, and so is also a likely guess for Byzantine use. We might assume that horse archers were carrying a quiver of forty arrows, as did the infantry. One tenth-century manuscript shows a foot soldier carrying a quiver which is a cylinder with a rounded base, and is hung from a baldric.[63] Although no arrows are shown in this picture, such a quiver would probably take the arrows point downwards. This arrangement was used by Sassanian mounted archers, but had been superseded by more efficient styles by the tenth century. Even by the end of late Antiquity, Roman archery had fully assimilated nomad methods.[64] These generally employed barrel-like quivers carrying the arrows point outward so that they can be drawn most directly and efficiently onto the bow. The Moshchevaya Balka quiver was of a semi-circular section and had such a barrel construction, although it was too damaged to be certain that it was used in this manner. The detail on the quiver in figure VII–8 is taken from a somewhat later Byzantine source.[65]

The sophistication of arms and armour described in Byzantine sources left little scope for technological improvement within the context of pre-gunpowder warfare. So the discernible changes over the next 200 years up to the Fourth Crusade are mainly attributable to economics. Generally the evidence indicates continuity. Remarks by Bishop Eustathios about women roused to the defence of Thessaloniki against the Normans in 1185 implies that turban and padded coat, as described in the tenth-century manuals, was still the minimal kit for infantry.[66] An interesting reflection of this is to be found on the ivory cover of Queen Melisende's Psalter, which was produced in Jerusalem around 1135 and mixes Byzantine and European artistic influences.[67] The figure of Fortitude wears a short-sleeved but hooded garment very similar to a

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[59] Ierusalimskaya, *Die Gräber . . .*, op. cit., p. 158 and plate XXIII.
[60] Haldon, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, op. cit., pp. 108/109 and 110/111 (Greek/English).
[61] *Sylloge Tacticorum*, 39.4; McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, op. cit., p. 213.
[62] *Strategikon*, Bk. I, ch. 1 and 2.
[63] Biblioteca Marciana, Venice (Ms. Z 454, f. 4r).
[64] The mosaic on the floor of the Great Palace dating from the sixth century clearly shows an archer drawing with the thumb. See also A. Bivar, 'Cavalry Equipment and Tactics on the Euphrates Frontier', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xxvi (1972), p. 285.
[65] An exquisitely detailed thirteenth-century icon of Saints Segios and Bacchos as cavalrymen in the Monastery of Saint Catherine Mount Sinai.
[66] J.R. Melville Jones, tr., *Eustathios of Thessaloniki: The Capture of Thessaloniki* (Canberra, 1988), pp. 89/90 (Greek/English).
[67] British Library, London (Ms. Egerton 1139); Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, pp. 391–3.

Western mail shirt like those shown in the Bayeux Tapestry, yet quilted with the pattern given in figure VII–1a. This is evidently an intermediate stage leading to the type of padded defence so prevalent in the *Maciejowski Bible* of the mid-thirteenth century which are quilted more simply than Byzantine practice, yet elaborated in form to resemble the mail hauberks of that time.

Despite dynastic conflicts and the onset of the Crusades, the eleventh and twelfth centuries were a period of economic growth which naturally led to better supply for the military.[68] Around the turn of the eleventh century lamellar underwent a further refinement in construction. In the first stage of assembly the plates were now riveted to the backing rather than being laced. Figure VII–12 shows the detail of a reconstruction of such lamellar based upon its earliest occurrences in art.[69] A large group of plates bearing a pattern of holes precisely matching this form of lamellar was found in the ruins of the Great Palace at Constantinople. They are precisely dated to the late twelfth century and were found in a destruction layer attributed to the Fourth Crusade.[70] Despite this survival, artworks are quite consistent in suggesting that four suspension laces were preferred in the twelfth century.[71]

A reflection of the greater resources available was an extension of the use of lamellar armour. A twelfth-century wall-painting of Saint Nestôr in the Church of Saint Nicholas at Kastoria shows the sleeves and *kremasmata* of his *klibanion* made of inverted lamellar[72] (fig. VII–13). This arrangement makes sound practical sense. Normal lamellar is made overlapping upward, primarily to remedy the vulnerability of downward overlapping scales to being lifted by thrusts, since such blows are almost always delivered to the torso on a rising slant. In contrast, blows to the arms and thighs are most commonly downwards, and so are best deflected by plates overlapping downward; hence the use of inverted lamellar or scales.[73] The picture of Nestôr further suggests that equipment of such high quality might also be employed by infantry in the twelfth century, since his *kremasma* forms a solid expanse from hip to hip. This could be viewed as perhaps being a piece of fanciful artistic licence, especially as the *kremasma* falls in a curve. Yet the arrangement proves to be entirely functional, and the armour does indeed tend to fall naturally into such a curve. This *kremasma* may well have been merely a single apron at the front, or it may have been matched by an identical panel at the back. This second option leads to the possibility that it might have been a dual purpose armour. Rotating the harness a quarter

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[68] A.P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 25–6 and 46–50.

[69] The earliest picture is that of Goliath in the so called *Psalter of Basil II* (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Ms. Z 17, f. 4v); the same pattern is found on a mosaic in the church of Hosios Loukos on Phokis; a soapstone icon of Saint Theodore Stratelates (Museo Sacro, inv. 982, Vatican City); Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, p. 158; Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeina, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* (Vienna, 1985), plate 7 and pp. 99–100.

[70] G. Martiny, G. Brett and R.B.K. Stevenson, *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors: Being a First Report on the Excavations Carried Out in Istanbul on Behalf of the Walker Trust (University of Saint Andrews) 1935–38* (London, 1947), pl. 58.7. An attempt was made to reconstruct these plates according to the generic lamellar pattern; P. Beatson, 'Byzantine Lamellar Armour: Conjectural Reconstruction of a Find from the Great Palace in Istanbul, Based upon Early Medieval Parallels', *Varangian Voice* 49 (November 1998), pp. 3–8. This attempt fails on two points: first, the result bears no resemblance to the consistent form of lamellar depicted in Byzantine art; secondly, the overlap required consumes almost half the plate, significantly more than is usual for that form of construction.

[71] An icon of three saints in the National Museum of the Ukraine, Kiev (inv. 84/36 445); Evans and Wixom, *op. cit.*, p. 300. Several more are shown in Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeina, *op. cit.*, plate 15.

[72] Published in *Istoria tou Ellenikou Ethnous* (Athens, 1980), p. 406. Inverted lamellar sleeves also appear on a wall-painting in the 'Serpent Church' at Goreme; D. Nicolle, 'An introduction to Arms and Warfare in Classical Islam', *Islamic Arms and Armour*, ed. R. Elgood (London, 1979), p. 178.

[73] A klibanion with scale sleeves is clearly shown in a thirteenth-century Syriac gospel in the Vatican Library, Rome (Vat. Cod. Syr. 559); M. Gorelik, 'Oriental Armour in the Near and Middle East from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries as shown in works of art', *Islamic Arms and Armour*, ed. Elgood (London, 1979), pp. 52–3, fig. 19; and another in the tenth to eleventh-century *Smyrna Octateuch* in the Vatican Library, Rome (Vat. Cod. Gr. 746 f.455r), Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 and 650, figs. 85ff.

turn would bring the *kremasmata* to fall down each thigh with openings front and rear permitting its use on horseback (figs. VII–10 and VII–11). Longer lamellar *kremasmata* could be made for dedicated cavalry use.

Other changes in equipment during this era were a matter of fashion. Through the twelfth century and onwards there was an increasing adoption of 'Frankish' (Western European) customs. One of these was a greater use of mail. This trend was also supported by economic factors, for while mail is less effective than lamellar, it is less expensive to produce, hence both types of armour were in better supply. The mail hood or coif, which was introduced during the Roman period, had probably never fallen completely out of use. It now staged a resurgence (fig. VII–13).[74] A Western European item which the Byzantines began to take up was mail hose or *chausses* to protect the legs. Similarly, kite-shaped shields with flatter tops become increasingly common.[75] The Phrygian cap-shaped helmet (figs. VII–10 and VII–11) was a Byzantine fashion first seen in the eleventh century that came to transcend ethnic boundaries in the following centuries.[76]

The historian Choniatês is unusually informative about arms and armour in use in the twelfth century.[77] He writes of horses wearing chamfrons (head protections) and breast pieces of lamellar,[78] of metal scale and lamellar armour,[79] cavalry armoured from head to foot,[80] and full mail aventails on cavalry helms;[81] the last being corroborated by Kinnamos.[82]

The mid-tenth century had seen a great tradition of Roman military technology reach a pinnacle of sophistication. This pinnacle became something of a plateau in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, yet a plateau which showed some technological innovations and which had a quality and prevalence which was never again to be reached in the history of the Byzantine Empire.

[74] *Strategikon*, Bk. VII, ch. 15; note that Dennis' English translation does not accurately reproduce the Greek at this point. Lines 15–16 say that the hood of mail should be thrown back on the shoulders; and Bk. X, ch. 1, which makes it clear that the mail hood is separate from the shirt or hauberk.

[75] Kinnamos credits Emperor Manuel I Comnenos with introducing 'Frankish' cavalry methods to the Byzantine army, specifically mentioning the replacement of round shields with kite-shaped shields. Iohannes Kinnamos, *Epitome Rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis*, ed. Augustus Meinke (Bonn, 1836), III.16, p. 125. C.M. Brand, trans., *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* (Colombia, 1976), p. 99.

[76] In Byzantine use, shown in several Cappadocian churches; see Nicolle, *Arms and Armour . . .*, op. cit., pp. 645–6, and Vatican Library, Rome (Vat. Cod. Gr. 746, f.61v). There are numerous other less well-rendered pictures which probably also indicate Phrygian caps; see following pages in Nicolle, *loc. cit.* Phrygian cap helmets became particularly popular in Spain; Nicolle, 'An introduction to Arms and Warfare . . .', op. cit., p. 174, and appear in many pictures in the manuscripts of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and *Book of Conquests* made for King Alphonso X.

[77] The eleventh and twelfth-century authors Micheal Psellos and Anna Comnena, holding to the tenets of Atticizing sylization, go out of their way to avoid telling us anything specific and accurate about military equipment. Instead they borrow stock phrases and terms from ancient writers; see H. Hunger, 'On the Imitation of Antiquity', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xxiii–xxiv (1969–70), and T. Dawson, 'The Varangian Rhomphaia', *loc. cit.* Choniates and Kinnamos do practise some Atticism, but often lapse into more informative narrative.

[78] Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J.-L. Van Dieten (Vienna, 1975), 156.7. Admittedly the language here is somewhat circumlocutory: διαδήμματα μασχαλιστηρᾶς . . . περικειμένων προμετωπίδια καὶ προστερνίδια τῶν βλημάτων ὁρύματα.

[79] *Ibid.*, 62.95 and 197.18.

[80] *Ibid., op. cit.*, 156.6.

[81] *Ibid.*, 92.39.

[82] Kinnamos, *Epitome Rerum. . . .*, op. cit., III. 9.

# Part V
# Logistics

# [19]

## Byzantine Logistics: Problems and Perspectives

*Walter E. Kaegi*

This essay explores the challenges of supply faced by Byzantium as it conducted campaigns against a formidable array of enemies in a variety of circumstances over the course of a millennium. Although one may quibble about dates, the most reasonable point for the beginning of Byzantine logistics was the creation of a seat of imperial government at the former city of Byzantium, now renamed Constantinople, by Emperor Constantine I in 330. That act created a new set of strategic realities with important effects on military transportation and communications; it marks the beginning of the early Byzantine period (A.D. 330-610). The seventh century brought a transition to the middle Byzantine period (610-1025), a distinctly different era in logistics, as the empire readjusted to enormous territorial losses to the Muslims, Avars, and Slavs, and to a lesser extent, to some of the Germanic kingdoms (especially to the Visigoths and Lombards). The principal scope of this essay is the early and middle Byzantine periods, because in the final or late Byzantine period (1025-1453), and especially after 1300, the empire faced diminishing strategic depth and multiple threats, which made its logistical situation a nightmare for anyone attempting to construct a viable defense of the empire.

Byzantine logistical theory and practice must be pieced together from disparate writings and records, since the Byzantines did not see logistics as a distinct branch of military experience with its own literature. No one simple Byzantine word for logistics exists, although there are terms like *touldon* for baggage train. But there was a classical Greek word for it—*logistike*, in the sense of "calculations," which are what logistics is. Hence Latin *logista*, from Greek *logistes*, one who calculates. But the term, although extant in very classical Greek authors and therefore available to Byzantine word purists, is rarely encountered in Byzantine texts, if at all, perhaps because of considerations of stylistic vocabulary. Logistics existed, of course, and has always existed in

some form, but my impression is that logistics is a problem of more concern to modern military planners than to Byzantine ones, although one must explain the limits of such a statement. One must use sources other than narrative histories to understand Byzantine logistics.

While Byzantines wrote of supplies, baggage, wagon trains, camps, bases, and provisions, they did not speak of logistics *per se* as the science of calculations for planning military supply. Their military manuals include references to the above details, and in their list of problems with which generals should be familiar they include ones that involve logistics, but they do not speak of that abstract term or concept in itself. In addition, surviving records on older campaigns probably helped the Byzantines to calculate the logistical needs of contemporary campaigns. The Roman heritage of military treatises and histories of campaigns was of limited value to the Byzantines because opponents and conditions had changed. Nevertheless, broad familiarity with earlier examples was probably of some value in trying to calculate needs and avoid mistakes. Yet there was probably no systematic searching among Roman precedents for their relevance to specific logistical challenges faced by Byzantines. More importantly, they would forge their own solutions to the specific problems they encountered.

### The Parameters of Byzantium's Logistical Challenges

The Byzantine Empire, as a glance at a map will underscore, depended upon transportation by water as well as by land. The logistical nerve center of the empire was Constantinople, but it could not exercise that function without domination of the waterways of the Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus.[1] Those vitally important waterways really needed only ferry-type transport ships, but they were indispensable. For reaching her extensive island possessions and Italy and the Crimea, the Byzantine Empire also needed larger seaworthy shipping, and for the modest navigable rivers, the Danube, and early in her history, the Nile and Euphrates, she needed riverboats. Because of the rugged topography of the Greek mainland and Anatolia, water transportation was the most reliable, if slow, way to reach many localities. So water transport was employed to move imperial troops as well as to ensure transportation of their supplies.

Where possible it was better to send supplies by sea, as the cost of overland transportation for bulky items was very high. It was difficult for Byzantium's opponents during most of her history to penetrate to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, but such penetration would in fact have resulted in the paralysis of her logistical system with its central requirement that the government be able to shift troops and supplies at will between Europe and Asia while simultaneously attempting to deprive others, whether external or internal foes of the government, of the ability to do likewise. Given the importance of the

Dardanelles, Bosphorus, and Sea of Marmara, the Byzantines built both shipping and coastal defense fortifications to dominate those waterways and to give the capital the flexibility to shift troops and warships in the direction it chose. Naval strength was important for holding on to Egypt, North Africa, and Italy, and points along the Black Sea.[2] But except for the Danube, rivers were not important for transporting men and material after the loss of Egypt and northern Syria in the seventh century.

Byzantium's other principal logistical nightmare was a two-front war at the furthest ends of its frontiers, namely, simultaneously on its eastern and northern frontiers, respectively: near the Caucasus, northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia; and in the Balkans at the Danube or Balkan mountains. That nightmare became a reality several times in the long history of the empire: most notably, in 626 and again later in the seventh century when Avaric and Slavic invasions and raids in the Balkans coincided with the Islamic conquests in western Asia and North Africa; in the late eleventh century, when Norman pressures on Byzantine southern Italy and the Balkans coincided with the Seljuk breakthroughs in Anatolia; and in the middle of the fourteenth century when the empire faced the rise of Serbia and its thrust toward Thessalonica while the Ottomans expanded in western Anatolia and then, in 1354, crossed into the Balkans as well.

At the same time, the Byzantine Empire was a vast land-based power with lengthy logistical lines. Any understanding of Byzantine logistics requires some regard for distances, more specifically the problems of distances within the empire in different directions from the capital. The most direct routes to the frontier with the Muslims in the eighth through early tenth centuries were more than six hundred to eight hundred kilometers long, while to the Armenian regions of the eastern frontier the distance was more than 1300 kilometers. From Constantinople west to the Danubian frontier in the early seventh century was another six hundred and more kilometers. If we assume that soldiers moved at approximately sixteen to twenty kilometers per day, with baggage trains moving even more slowly, then we can say that the speed of transportation was predictably very slow, whether by land or sea. Of course the use of expensive mounted couriers or fire signals or mirrors could accelerate communication of information.

Several frontiers involved special logistical challenges. The most complex logistical systems—because of the seriousness of the external threat, the length of the exposed frontiers, the need to supply large numbers of Byzantine forces for positional and mobile warfare, and because of the absence of self-sufficiency of some kinds of local provisions and equipment—were those for Upper Mesopotamia and the defense of Syria (where supplies of food, wood for construction and fuel were inadequate), the Danube (inadequate supplies of pay, food, weapons, mounts, and clothing), and the overseas backup for whatever Byzantine presence there was in Italy (repeated problems of procur-

ing adequate soldiers' pay and food because of corruption, distances and poor communications with Constantinople). The Byzantines could not easily support troops on the Sava River or in what is now western Serbia.[3] The weather created almost impassable transportation bottlenecks in the spring and winter, especially in the East, in the mountains of Armenia. There were always grave dangers for supplies in mountain passes (not only because of inherent challenges of tortuous terrain but also because of time-honored efforts of one's foes to try to cut off supplies by blocking or ambushing or even annihilating supply trains in transit through the perilous passes); hence much discussion of this in military manuals.

Water routes helped in the transport of men and supplies to the edges of Anatolia, but there were limits. Ships could bring troops to the periphery of Anatolia, but the topography rose in elevation very sharply a few kilometers inland, creating more hurdles to goods than to men being moved into the interior. The Anatolian Plateau required its own land-based logistical system rather than much reliance on ship-transferred supplies at the hard-to-reach ports on its perimeter. Pack animals, not wheeled vehicles, were essential for transporting goods and supplies from any ports through the surrounding heights to the interior.

Because the size of armies is an important variable in systems of logistical support, it is necessary to note briefly the changing strength of the Byzantine army from period to period. In the age of Justinian I, the total army probably was inferior to its reputed paper strength of 150,000. By the reign of Heraclius in the early seventh century, on the eve of the emergence of Islam, total Byzantine armies were somewhat smaller; the largest operational forces may have reached 30,000 or more, while the total army may have hit 113,000 to 130,000, plus indeterminate numbers of barbarians, especially Arabs. For the late eighth century, one scholar estimates 80,000 total troops, a number which he believes rose to 120,000 by 842. By the fourteenth century the size of the army fell to a few thousand.[4]

Byzantine logistics had to function in an environment of shrinking population, financial and technical knowledge. To some extent, the empire had the opportunity to utilize late Roman structures and infrastructures, but the problem was that those were often too costly to maintain and repair in the face of declining material and human resources. This affected the logistical situation as well. Because the empire's generals and ministers had to skimp, it was necessary for them to modify procedures and institutions adapted from their relatively more bountiful Roman military heritage. They had to do more with less. It was impossible to conduct warfare on a scale comparable to that of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. But this transformation happened gradually: late Roman logistics imperceptibly changed into Byzantine logistics. Older Roman logistical vocabulary survived in part, but transliterated or transformed from Latin into Greek for record-keeping. No unique Byzantine

ideology affected or energized the conception and implementation of logistical services. The eastern provinces of the empire experienced a scaling down of the size of armies and their supplies from the fifth through the beginning of the seventh century, in accordance with these changing realities. This, not style or technology, was the critical characteristic that distinguished Byzantine from Roman logistics.

The relative lack of resources meant that the empire did not rely on massive fortifications with commensurably large garrisons and provisions to match. Instead the emphasis was on minimal (and lighter and more mobile) defenses, with a minimum of commitment to the piling up of massive supplies of provisions and arms. Thus quantitative superiority was never the dominating principle behind the wars that the Byzantines waged. Their writers tirelessly argued, perhaps with excessive confidence, that craft and intellectual acumen could overcome numerical adversity, so there never was even a theoretical predilection to seeking overwhelming numerical superiority in provisions and weapons or personnel to ensure victory.[5]

The late Roman praetorian prefecture had been unable to handle the logistics of the empire very well. It was in charge of baking and distributing bread for troops on land or sea. Its officials calculated the needs of the troops and accordingly instructed local provincial and municipal officials to collect and distribute the necessary quantities of provisions (wine, vinegar, grain, cheese, meat) to the soldiers. Often the local officials cheated and profited on the transaction or interfered with procuring the full amounts. The cumbersome *annonae*, or military rations or ration shares or taxes in kind, provided a means for procuring provisions, but this practice was subject to corruption and wastage. Rations in kind had been the foundation of supplies in late antiquity, but practices were modified in the seventh century and became essentially transformed by the middle Byzantine period.[6] The seventh century experienced the greatest single crisis of Byzantine logistics, in fact, its very experiences (e.g., Avaric and Slavic invasions and settlements in the Balkans, and Muslim conquests of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Upper Mesopotamia, Armenia, and North Africa) caused the creation of a substantially modified system. It was extremely difficult for the government to support more than 15,000 expeditionary troops of reasonable quality in the field. Byzantine armies rarely exceeded that in the middle period and were smaller in the final centuries of the empire.

There were no important innovations in transportation by the Byzantines. Likewise there was no Louvois or Le Tellier, that is, no single Byzantine creative genius or reformer in logistics. There was no Byzantine military revolution in tactics, operations, or logistics. Byzantine techniques and practices worked well enough to permit the empire to preserve much of its territory for centuries, but the conservatism of its leaders discouraged the kind of inquiry and readiness to adapt to change that was imperative for long-term survival. Pack animals were important for transport, in fact much more important than

wagons. There were special problems procuring pack animals and making sure they reached the distant eastern frontiers. They receive extensive mention in a treatise on imperial expeditions from Constantinople to the eastern frontier.[7] The old Roman post system broke down sometime in the seventh century, and maintenance of other infrastructure, such as milestones, probably broke down too. Roads slowly were transformed into routes or tracks, and others fell into disuse and sometimes became overgrown with vegetation. Loss of much of what had been the Roman Empire reduced the resources but also shortened lines of communication.

Availability of natural resources affected logistics. The scarcity of water was a principal problem in parts of the East and Southeast, but not in Europe. In fact, the need for drinking water was necessarily a principal factor to calculate in operations in the empire's East, as well as in lengthy naval expeditions. Lack of timber in parts of the East required bringing some wood along for certain military purposes, especially for siege operations.

## Logistical Problems

The Byzantines inherited Roman traditions of the camp as the military base, although this was adapted to the realities of an era different from that of the legionary.[8] The authors of manuals stressed the need to locate camps near supplies of water. Military manuals also gave much discussion to the problem of the placement of supplies and the related camp near scenes of battle and how to guard the supplies and the baggage train. There is an extensive literature on this, however unglamorous. An objective in warfare was the seizure of such supplies and their bases. The manuals contained some attentiveness to problems of provisions before the engagement. They include warnings to keep some several days' supplies of food and other provisions some distance from the battlefield in the event of a defeat and the need to retreat. Troops before battle were expected to have an extra day's rations on hand in the event of victory so that they could engage in more effective pursuit. Military manuals included descriptions of how to protect the supplies of the troops. They also warn to try to prevent foragers from being ambushed while gathering provisions on campaign. While these manuals avoid many details, the tone of references about provisions is one of caution and prevention or reduction of risk. But the exhortations of the manuals is not the same as the methods and procedures for calculating logistical needs, which no extant manual explains.

The problem of the procurement of weapons is not given much attention in the literature. Soldiers had to present weapons and mounts for inspection to demonstrate that they were fit. Specific districts might be ordered to produce weapons such as arrows. Muslims, according to one Muslim treatise, admired the quality of Byzantine spearheads. The Maurice *Strategikon* states that the commanding officers are responsible for arming and equipping soldiers and

that the commanding officer of a *meros* (7000 men approximately) should determine needs and purchase arms and equipment during the winter season.[9] The precise procedures for doing this, however, are not described in any detail whatever; neither are we told whether, as was likely, the procedures involved some fiscal bureau of the government, i.e., the praetorian prefecture.

Moreover, the Byzantine military manuals, unlike the memoranda of Constantine VII, say nothing about how to calculate those needs.[10] Leo VI in his *Tactica* (ca A.D. 900) ordered that soldiers be armed and equipped by their officers during the winter season. Leo VI also described the kinds of wagons required for carrying arrows and stipulated that units also should have a hand-mill. Soldiers' tools included hammers and axes for siege machines, pitch, bread, bows, pack animals to be able to go ahead without wagons,[11] and twenty or thirty pounds of biscuit is to be placed at a distance for emergency use.[12] Leo VI warns that above all, before embarking on expedition into enemy territory, make certain that you have supplies and fodder for the animals in case the enemy has devastated the territory and has left nothing to consume.[13] Maurice, *Strategikon*, also warns to hobble the oxen who pull wagons before battle so they do not attempt to dash away frightened and thereby disturb men and horses.[14] He advises testing the water in enemy territory by first trying it on the prisoners.[15] Maurice also warns to destroy the forage for the enemy when they are strong in cavalry.[16] He also stresses that troops should carry enough rations, a day's worth, so that they need not break off operations for their lack.[17] There is always the question, however, how much the manuals represent realities instead of the ideal. All of this underscores that logistics was an object of imperial foresight and concern.

The Byzantine military manuals provide some of the best sources for understanding how supply systems functioned, even though many gaps and puzzles remain. There are reports of warehouses near the eastern frontier at several points in the seventh century, and again reports of these in the tenth century. These warehouses were for military purposes, to contain ready supplies for the army, including grain and fodder. They appear to be located where defensive or offensive action tended to repeat itself, that is, in problem areas of the frontier such as Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia in the seventh century. There is no evidence that they existed everywhere.[18] Archaeological evidence has not been probed for information on logistics. It may someday give evidence on warehouses and supply ships, but it is unlikely to solve many other obscure questions concerning logistics. Sigillography may help, however.

Logistics was intimately intertwined with the tax system and fiscal administration in the early Byzantine period. Although connections cannot have been completely severed in the middle period, one simply does not hear about it much. In the early Byzantine period a number of governmental ministers were identified with mismanagement and corruption in the handling of logistics, most notably, the praetorian prefect John the Cappadocian in the reign of

Justinian.[19] There are no reports of sensational scandals about this in the middle Byzantine period, although the reasons remain unclear. The principal catalyst for change in the seventh century was the leadership's realization that the empire and its army faced a fiscal crisis that was equally a logistical crisis.

Procurement of supplies disrupted prices and the civilian economy in specific regions where large numbers of troops were temporarily concentrated for operations in the fourth century at Antioch in the reign of Julian and in Anatolia in the late sixth century, ca 575. Probably there were other cases that remain unreported and unknown.[20]

Another complex and obscure logistical problem is the nature and role of the camps and their probable roles in logistics in the early period, including the *praefectus praetorio vacans*. This was an improvisation to help with problems of logistics.[21] However the creation of such positions did not solve recurring deficiencies.

Byzantine emperors ceased to campaign in person from the death of Theodosius I in A.D. 395 until the reign of Heraclius, in A.D. 612 or 613. In those intervening years one may assume that emperors had no firsthand knowledge of logistical problems, except any recollections of their own from military service prior to rising to the throne. What they learned from oral or written reports of others, however, is hard to judge and may have been extensive. How Heraclius actually altered the practice of logistics is unclear. After the resumption of campaigning in the field by emperors the likelihood of emperors' knowing and understanding something of logistics probably vastly improved and may explain in part the reduction in instances of military unrest because of grievances concerning logistical problems. That does not mean that logistical problems ceased to exist, but at least emperors might have had some personal familiarity with them and with the personnel who might solve them and understand just how important and critical such problems might be and how their solution might affect the outcome of military operations. Mistaken judgments concerning logistical problems in the intervening years may have derived, at least partially, from the lack of emperors' experience with such issues.

The empire benefited from interior lines in conceiving and acting on its strategy. Its foes' logistical problems were different and depended more on flexibility and mobility. Byzantium's defense-in-depth was a mobile one in theory, but it was, in reality, a cumbersome mobility.

The foe with the most sophisticated logistical system in the early Byzantine period was of course the Sassanian Persian Empire, but until the seventh century, it could not support lengthy expeditions into Byzantine territory. Until the Crusades, most other foes of Byzantium lacked staying power in long expeditionary campaigns. The Byzantines took advantage—at least they tried to—of the logistical problems of their enemies to defeat them without taking

maximum casualties in doing it. The Byzantines preferred a strategy of exhaustion and delaying tactics to cause their opponents to wear themselves down and expose themselves to attack. These strategies involved many assumptions about logistics, in particular that both the Byzantines and their opponents, the invaders, commanded only limited provisions.

One may speculate concerning how well emperors and their advisers understood and appreciated logistics. Justinian I neglected it in his extensive operations in the middle of the sixth century. Logistical problems had been objects of fear ever since the debacle against the Vandals in the reign of Leo I in the late fifth century. The imperial advisers wisely avoided overstraining logistics and so eschewed major expeditions to penetrate or conquer areas north of the Black Sea. The Byzantines could not have supported their troops there. Likewise they could not have penetrated further into North Africa. Limits on logistics became understandably intertwined with limits of finances and manpower. Therefore it is doubtful whether one can calculate approximate percentages of total military costs that were attributable to logistics.

The Byzantines were far from infallible in their logistical calculations. If anything, in a world without mass production they tended to underestimate needs for supplies and manpower and draft animals. These problems derived usually from political decisions to push on irrespective of realistic calculations. However, such decisions were not made by the bureaucrats, who tended to be cautious although very possibly corrupt. The government tended to become overstretched in its commitments to military expeditions. But these miscalculations were exceptions, however costly ones.

Presumably military commanders had some idea about how changing weather conditions affected transportation and rates and security of communications, but prediction and information may well have been very primitive except for cases in which friendly barbarians, deserters, and scouts could provide more accurate information.

There were, however, some advantages to being a very old bureaucratic empire, especially with respect to logistics. Most Byzantine military expeditions took place in regions where the Byzantines had some previous experience. We have no precise knowledge of how long older records and plans were kept, but some knowledge survived of aborted as well as unsuccessful military expeditions and invasions. That does not mean that the results of earlier experiences were always communicated to those who were responsible for planning and calculating the needs for the latest military operations. There probably was no systematic culling of surviving materials, but some traditions and reports survived, accurate or inaccurate as they might be. And conditions could and did change. Obsolete knowledge and stereotypes could be dangerous. Incautious planning could result in disastrous logistical problems in the Balkans, in North Africa, in Sicily, and of course in western Asia. Even for major

expeditions, the regions involved were ones where the empire, at some point in its lengthy past, had conducted operations. Even though the enemy leaders, structure, and conditions might have changed very much since the last experiences, one was not taking expeditionary forces into wholly unknown regions.

Because during much of the middle and late Byzantine periods the empire's logistics generally involved calculations for defensive operations, which lay within the empire's borders, the logistical needs were being calculated for regions and personnel that should have been well known to the responsible bureaucrats. That should have been a much less daunting challenge than calculating for major offensive expeditionary campaigns. Much of the relevant calculations involved planning for the collection and stockpiling of adequate supplies of grain at predictable exposed frontier regions which the enemy traditionally attacked. In the early period they included the frontier region in Upper Mesopotamia and parts of Armenia. Logistics in support of a defensive strategy assumed slow-moving warfare. There was danger of damage to the empire's own agriculture and property. There were also complex issues involved in billeting troops with the empire's subjects.

In the early Byzantine period, logistics in many peripheral regions involved assumptions about heavy logistical support and information from allied peoples. Thus there was a need for and an expectation of aid from friendly Arab tribes in logistics across the desert between Syria and central Mesopotamia, or again for operations east of the Dead Sea. Aid from friendly peoples in the Caucasus was indispensable for successful military operations there. The logistics in the Caucasus were complex and difficult. It was necessary to have special provisions to support troops in Thrace and, in the early period, in Upper Mesopotamia. In both regions money was not enough. One needed to ensure the availability of sufficient supplies of food for men and fodder for animals. The upper Euphrates River was always logistically important for the Byzantines and for their foes as an invasion route.

Very little information exists except for incidental references in narrative sources about how well and in what detail there was communication and cooperation between the military and bureaucrats in coordinating calculations for supplies and in actually articulating military, that is, strategic and operational planning. There was potential for friction between individuals, there was potential hostility to bureaucrats, especially eunuchs, on the part of military commanders and their soldiers.

Byzantine bureaucratic or political control of the armies depended in part on exploiting the dependency of the armies on logistics. Therefore bureaucrats appointed by the fisc were not directly responsible to military field commanders but to bureaucrats in Constantinople (not unlike the military intendants of the seventeenth-century French army who exercised some watchful control

over royal generals).[22] Such bureaucrats controlled money and supplies and the records, including the invaluable muster lists of the units. It is uncertain how Byzantine bureaucracies maintained or attempted to ensure quality control of supplies. In some instances (bad bread on naval expedition to Africa in 533), they clearly failed to achieve that aim.

During the middle Byzantine period the so-called theme system was an essential part of the military structure for land and maritime operations. Within each theme (army and its military district), the military commander, often called *strategos*, commanded the troops, but the *chartoularios* was in charge of the muster list and the *protonotarios* was in charge of weapons and supplies and money. The last two officials really were responsible for the logistical side of each theme's organization.[23] Little study has been done concerning the unspectacular *protonotarios* of the theme. But no archives survive from any theme, although we do have many lead seals from various themes. These were used to authenticate and seal documents. The disintegration of the theme system by the end of the tenth century, together with poorer documentation, makes it difficult to understand how the government handled logistical procurement and planning after AD 1000.

The potential liability of the empire's subjects for physical labor in support of the logistical needs of its armies is beyond the scope of this essay. There was a loose group of taxes called *angareia* (loads or burdens) that could be used for military support. How did the emergence of the Byzantine theme "system" change Byzantine logistics? The government still remained responsible for supporting, that is, supplying, troops while on expeditionary campaign.[24] One knows even less about the logistical support system for elite mobile expeditionary armies called the *tagmata*, or imperial guard units of the eighth and ninth centuries. Muslim geographical texts claim that Byzantine soldiers were expected to bring along their own food for campaigning (one source cites the types of food). That could only have been the case for campaigns of limited territorial scope. For long-distance, that is, expeditionary, campaigns it would have been necessary for the government to ensure adequate provisions.

As one rereads the appendix to the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII's *Book of Ceremonies*, it is clear that two other officials are prominent when the emperor campaigns in person in the tenth century: the count of the imperial stable and the *logothete* of the flocks.[25] They are in charge of horses and pack animals and are the principal officials concerned with quartermaster responsibilities when the imperial household is involved in a major military campaign.[26] But such cases do not mean every military campaign, because the emperor did not always campaign in person. At the less elevated level, it was the protonotarioi of the themes who prepared the local supplies for an expedition, probably conforming to their inherited role from the long since disappeared praetorian prefecture of the late Roman Empire.

## Evaluations

In general, the logistical system of the empire was cumbersome and relatively inefficient in the early period. In later centuries the empire was smaller and poorer and could no longer function as it had in its earliest centuries. One wonders how fully the empire's leaders and their advisors even understood the empire's logistical needs. There was no unified budget or cross-referenced master lists for supplies.

Consistent with Byzantium's character as a venerable bureaucratic empire, its leaders tended to handle normal logistical situations satisfactorily; they were able to draw on their extensive experience to manage those tasks adequately. The empire's leaders tended to be risk-averse. Their caution reduced the number of major risky aggressive campaigns with their attendant problems of logistical overextension. Their inclination to avoid risky wars and to preserve or alter only modestly the *status quo* probably contributed to the empire's longevity. It was the unforeseen and rapid changes and challenges that were extremely difficult for Byzantium to handle. The empire was insufficiently flexible to react or adapt quickly enough to major new challenges for which her historical experiences offered no easy lessons.

How much of a difference did logistics make in the history of the empire? By the late period, the Venetians appear to have developed a logistical system well suited for themselves. The Ottomans had little to learn from Byzantine logistics, which were reduced to insignificance by the time of the emergence of the Ottomans. However, the Byzantine Empire's logistical system did not function impossibly badly, because the empire survived for a very long time. Yet it was a system for passive retention for an essentially status quo power, rather than an aggressively expansionistic one (even though it did temporarily recover Bulgaria in the late tenth century, as well as many of the Taurus passes and some of northern Syria at the same—late tenth/early eleventh century—period.)

Changes in Byzantine logistics occurred for a number of reasons: major changes in the financial resources of the empire and its consequent ability to finance its logistics; changes in the enemies of the empire and their ways of fighting; supposed changes in technology, but these were not great in that period; and changes in administrative structure of the empire and its localities/ provinces. Yet the logistical problems of the fourth and fifth centuries were far different from those of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which in turn were far different from those of the fourteenth. Byzantine logistics did not remain static.

Throughout most of its history the Byzantine Empire was not engaged in major expeditionary campaigns beyond its borders, so most of the logistical operations and challenges of the empire involved operating within familiar borders or once familiar borders and routes of the empire, where there should have been records and standard practices and traditions and memories of how to conduct logistical operations. Those traditions may have been an impedi-

ment as well as an asset. But the greatest dangers were not necessarily the unfamiliar ones, as much as the fact that Byzantium was pressed on two separated fronts simultaneously or eventually, and this simply put too much financial strain on the limited resources of the government and its subjects. Strategically, the Byzantines were normally conservative, trying to hold on to what was their own or to recover what had once been part of the Roman Empire. Concerning such areas there were many traditions and records, in theory, if one knew how and had the time and willingness to investigate older records. But that does not mean that there were no challenges to Byzantine logistics. Everything was far from being smooth and easy.

Speed was primarily of essence in cutting off raiders in such a defensive empire. The logistical system was slow and cumbersome, but the empire could live with that. It counted on the slowness of logistics and travel and communications to help contain and discourage its enemies during the first seven centuries of its existence, when it still possessed some territorial and strategic depth. Older traditions had sometimes spoken of the advantages or indeed the necessity of a lightning strike against a foe in central Mesopotamia, but normal reality was slow campaigning and slow logistics. This normally allowed time to recoup, to reflect, and to react.

In the early period, it was extremely difficult for the empire to maintain logistical support and communications with its small garrisons in North Africa, scattered over a long irregularly guarded perimeter, and in Spain and the Balearics and Sardinia and Sicily. That defense was not sophisticated but involved a modest holding operation with the minimum of troops. Such was the general defense at the end of the early period: defenses stretched very thin, with ever less complex logistical systems being able to be supported. Moreover, private shipping was declining in the sixth and seventh centuries and so was probably less reliable and frequent to aid the government in carrying materials and men and provisions for the Byzantine troops. The condition of local civilians, moreover, was deteriorating, so they were less likely to be able to supply the Byzantine troops easily from their own resources. At the same time, the financial and demographic base for supporting the Byzantine in the West was declining.

Weaknesses in central procurement and tax revenues required more emphasis on local self-support in the matter of military and civilian provisioning and the procurement of military supplies. The old state arms factories (*fabricae*) cease to be mentioned, although it was still necessary to have weapons and shirts (formerly provided by the Comitiva Sacrarum Largitionum or Count of the Sacred Largesses) for the troops.[27] Yet problems of provisioning never brought the total decentralization of everything or reduction of everything to centrifugal forces.

The passage of a large army was probably usually much more of a burden than an economic benefit for Byzantines, just as it had been earlier for subjects

of the Roman Empire. There was too much requisitioning and billeting. Despite hortatory references in legal codes to the need for sparing the civilian population of the empire, the passage of soldiers was a hardship because of the inadequate logistical system. But the government never developed sufficient transport to convey all of the necessary supplies. It necessarily resorted to various expedients that reduced themselves to requisitioning.

It was not realistic to expect to find requisitionable supplies in extensive quantities on the borders of the empire, for those regions were topographically rough and only lightly inhabited, with little arable land. Probably much territory was overgrown with vegetation, where the rainfall permitted it. In such areas the soldiers needed to have the government plan for its supply system and not just expect the troops to forage successfully for themselves. Probably efforts to accumulate adequate provisions for major campaigns tended to tip off the enemy about impending campaigns.

Muslim geographers emphasized the need to take into account the condition of vegetation in planning expeditions into Byzantine territory. Thus raids in the late winter, late February and early March, were to last only twenty days because of the need to return to Muslim territory so that the horses would again find good grass. Muslims believed that the winter weakened the Byzantines and their mounts, a strange counterpart to the Byzantine assumption that Arabs and Persians were enervated in the cold weather! Spring campaigns could last thirty days, while summer ones were to last sixty days because of the availability of fodder. Logistical assumptions are fundamental in these calculations.[28] The authors assume that except in the summer, there was only a limited supply of fodder available for the mounts of the raiders.

Arabic sources are the most important extant ones on the logistics of the principal sophisticated foes of the Byzantines in the middle period, the Muslims of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates. The Bulgars and Slavs and Avars and Magyars had no sophisticated logistical support systems, nor did the Rus or Carolingians. The logistical challenges for the Muslims were formidable, involving distances, weather, disinformation, and danger of hostile action by the Byzantines.

The Byzantines inherited a legacy of poliorcetic traditions. But the conduct of sieges required sophisticated logistical preparations and support. Most Byzantine-conducted sieges took place on the empire's eastern or southeastern frontiers, where there were more cities and sophisticated fortresses. Exceptional sieges in the Balkans did take place, however, such as those of Silistra (Dorystolon, in Bulgaria) in the late tenth century. Logistical organization was indispensable for sieges.

The Byzantine government wanted its central imperial authorities to control logistics in order to maintain and increase imperial authority. They did not want to decentralize logistics for fear that this could result in centrifugal tendencies within the empire that would be harmful to the empire and the

reigning dynasty. It was dangerous, in the eyes of the government, to delegate authority for logistics to those who might turn against the government and perhaps also against the specific faction who controlled the government.

It appears that the Byzantines failed to develop proper logistical support for their armies and border garrisons after the Byzantine reconquest or reoccupation of those regions in the east in the eleventh century. That is one of the several reasons for the collapse of Byzantine armed resistance at the moment of the Seljuk invasions in the eleventh century. Logistical problems of defending those remote areas were not given serious study and serious resources. Muslim geographers provide the fullest information, however imperfect, about conditions in those frontier zones. The Byzantine sources about logistical conditions in those areas are very poor indeed. The Byzantines required much more complex and comprehensive logistical infrastructure if they expected to expand very much beyond what they had already conquered. That was not impossible, but it required much planning and resolve, which they apparently never accomplished. Their older systems would have been inadequate.

Any attempt to evaluate the overall effectiveness of Byzantine logistics should take into account the longevity of the empire. The system cannot have been all bad, because like other aspects of the Byzantine military system, it contributed in part to the empire's lengthy survival without so overstraining the capacities of the empire's subjects that it brought on collapse and permanent breakdown. That does not mean that the system would necessarily have worked well elsewhere, or that it was without problems. Yet it evidently was not impossibly deficient. The Byzantines, for the most part, did learn in fact to live and fight within their means. There is no evidence that the Byzantine logistical experience heavily influenced other states' military institutions and planning. Their institutions for logistics did not appear to be very excellent to others and so they, in contrast to some other institutions, did not become a Byzantine legacy to others.

## Notes

1. A. Philippson, *Das byzantinische Reich als geographische Erscheinung* (Leiden: Brill, 1939); E. McGeer and A.P. Kazhdan, s.v. "Army," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 183-185.

2. Hélène Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).

3. Walter E. Kaegi, "The Capability of the Byzantine Army for Military Operations in Italy," to be published in volume ed. by Antonio Carile, *Teodorico e i Goti tra Oriente e Occidente* (forthcoming, Università di Bologna).

4. Estimates for the reigns of Justinian and Heraclius are my own revisions from Walter E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 39-41. For 780 and 842: use with caution Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) Table I, p. 353. But for criticisms, see also, R.-J. Lilie, "Die byzantinischen Staatsfinanzen im 8./9.

Jahrhundert und die *stratiotika ktemata*," *Byzantinoslavica* 48 (1987), pp. 49-55. Mark Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 247-53, 262-65.

5. Walter E. Kaegi, *Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy* (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College, 1983).

6. Walter E. Kaegi, "Variable Rates of Change in the Seventh Century," *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 191-208; Walter E. Kaegi, "The *Annona Militaris* in the Early Seventh Century," *Byzantina* 13 (1985), pp. 591-96. See Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 35-38. Praetorian prefecture: A.H.M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), pp. 448-62; L.E.A. Franks, "The Fiscal Role and Financial Establishment of the Praetorian Prefects in the Later Roman Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Christ's College, Cambridge University, 1971). For a reconstruction of the disappearance of the pretorian prefecture, see John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 195-207; cf. Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Dioclétian aux Carolingiens, 284-889* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990); cf. S.J. Barnish, "Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement," *Papers of the British School in Rome*, n.s. 54 (1986) 185-95.

7. Constantine VII, "What Should Be Observed When the Great and High Emperor of the Romans Goes on Campaign," in *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. trans. John Haldon (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), lines 75-139, 185-187, 286, 347-419, on pp. 98-103, 106-107, 112-113, 116-121.

8. Pseudo-Hyginus, *Des fortifications du camp*, ed. trans. Maurice Lenoir (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1979).

9. Maurice, *Strategikon*, 1.2 in *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. George Dennis and trans. E. Gamillscheg (Vienna: Verlag der Akademie, 1981) p. 76, and in Maurice, *Strategikon*, ed. George Dennis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), p. 12. Hereafter, these two editions will be referred to simply as Dennis-Gamillscheg and Dennis.

10. Other than a reference in Leo VI, *Tactica*, 6.2, in Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus: series graecia*, 161 vols. (Paris: 1857- ), 107:721, to the need for about thirty to forty arrows per soldier plus an adequate number of bowstrings, and two spears. See also Maurice, *Strategikon*, 1.2 (Dennis, p. 12). Regarding officers equipping soldiers during winter see Maurice, *Strategikon*, 1.2 (Dennis, p. 14).

11. Leo VI, *Tactica*, 6. 28-29, in Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus*, 107:730; also in Maurice, *Strategikon*, 12B.6 ( Dennis-Gamillscheg, pp. 422-23); (Dennis, p. 139)

12. Leo VI, *Tactica*, 10.13, in Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus*, 107:790; on baggage train see entire section 10. Maurice, *Strategikon*, Book 5 (Dennis, pp. 58-60).

13. Leo VI, *Tactica*, 17. 36, in Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus*, 107:922.

14. See Maurice, *Strategikon*, 12B.22 (Dennis, p. 161) on hobbling oxen; see 5.2., 3 (Dennis, p. 58-59) on leaving reserve horses in camp away from the battlefield to avoid confusion.

15. Maurice, *Strategikon*, 9.3 (Dennis, p. 99-100).

16. Maurice, *Strategikon*, 7 pr. (Dennis, p. 64).

17. Maurice, *Strategikon*, 7.10 (Dennis, p. 67); cf. 7.13 (Dennis, p. 68).

18. Walter E. Kaegi, "Annona Militaris in the Seventh Century"; Walter E. Kaegi, "Variable Rates of Change in the Seventh Century," in F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys,

*Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 191-208.

19. Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 3.13.12-24, in *Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: 1954), including bread problems but also ones of good drinking water 3.12.23-24.

20. Glanville Downey, "The Economic Crisis at Antioch under Julian the Apostate," *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson*, ed. by P.R. Coleman-Norton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 312-21; P. de Jonge, "Scarcity of Corn and Cornprices in Ammianus," *Mnemosyne*, Ser. 4, 1 (1948), pp. 238-45; Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest* , pp. 64-88.

21. On all of this see J. Karayannopoulos, "Byzantinische Miszellen," in *Studia in Honorem Veselin Beshevliev* (Sofia: Academy, 1979), pp. 490-91; Walter E. Kaegi, "Two Studies on the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982), pp. 98-113, and "Late Roman Continuity in the Financing of Heraclius' Army," *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinisten-Kongress, Akten = Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/2 (1982), pp. 53-61; and some criticisms of them by Paul Speck, "War Bronze ein knappes Metall? Die Legende von dem Stier auf dem Bus in den 'Parastaseis' 42," *Hellenika* 39 (1988), pp. 3-17; N. Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits: Salary and Recruitment," *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies Presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75*, ed. by John Duffey and John Peradutto (Buffalo: Arethusa, 1988), pp. 121-36, and Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 34. But Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* , pp. 201-7, 220-32. See R. Scharf, "Praefecti praetorio vacantes: Generalquartiermeister des spätrömischen Heeres," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 17 (1991), pp. 223-33.

22. Douglas C. Baxter, *Servants of the Sword: French Intendants of the Army* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976).

23. Kaegi, "Two Studies," esp. pp. 98-111, and N. Oikonomides, *Listes des préséances byzantines* (Paris: CNRS, 1972), pp. 314-15, 341, 364. R.-J. Lilie, "Die zweihundertjährige Reform," *Byzantinoslavica* 45 (1984), pp. 27-39, 190-201; Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, pp. 208-53.

24. N. Oikonomides, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits: Salary and Recruitment," *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies Presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75*, ed. by John Duffey and John Peradutto (Buffalo: Arethusa, 1988), pp. 121-36.

25. Constantine VII, "What Should be Observed When the Emperor Intends to Go on an Expedition," in Haldon, *Three Treatises*, line 53, on pp. 84-85; Oikonomides, *Listes*, pp. 338-39.

26. Constantine VII, "What Should Be Observed When the Great and High Emperor of the Romans Goes on Campaign," in Haldon, *Three Treatises* , lines 59-60, 69-74, 75-84, 314, 333-335, 353-354, 411, on pp. 96-99, 114-117, 120-121.

27. Roland Delmaire, *Largesses Sacrées et Res Privata. l'Aerarium Impérial et son administration du IVe au VIe siècle* (Paris: Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 121; Paris: Boccard, 1989). S. James, "The *fabricae*: State Arms Factories of the Later Roman Empire," *Military Equipment and the Identity of Roman Soldiers. Proceedings of the Fourth Roman Military Equipment Conference*, ed. J.C. Coulson. BAR International Series 394 (Oxford: BAR, 1988), pp. 257-331.

28. M.-J. De Goeje, ed., *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (Leiden: Brill, reprint 1967), 6: 200.

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## THE ORGANISATION AND SUPPORT OF AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE: MANPOWER AND LOGISTICS IN THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD

## JOHN HALDON

### I

It is generally recognised that the maintenance of its armies and the recruitment and equipping of its military expeditions constituted one of the heaviest burdens on the finances of the East Roman state[1]. But for much of the period from the seventh to the twelfth century we have very little detailed and direct evidence for how this was managed at a general level, hence the still unresolved debates on the origins of the so-called theme system; still less direct evidence survives on the structure of campaigns undertaken against particular enemies. There is virtually no contemporary evidence, for example, for the means through which the armies of the emperor Constantine V were raised and supplied in his numerous campaigns into Bulgaria or against the caliphate in the East, except what we can glean from the hazy report of the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, or the *Brief History* of the patriarch Nikephoros. Yet the methods adopted for equipping and supplying armies crucially affect their fighting ability and potential, the planning and execution of campaign strategy, and the speed with which soldiers can be mobilised and then marched to meet the enemy. The nature of the communications and transport infrastructure and the ways in which a central government is able to maintain or extend it is thus also a crucial element which affects a state's ability to respond defensively to external threat or to act offensively against a neighbouring power. Byzantines themselves were clearly aware of these factors and the key role they played, as the Tactica of the emperor Leo VI, compiled in the late ninth or early tenth century, in two brief sections «On Logistics», makes clear[2].

By the ninth century, it is clear that the system of recruiting and maintaining soldiers in what had been the field armies of the late Roman state had undergone a

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1. E. g., M. F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450*, Cambridge 1985, p. 157 ff., 221 ff.

2. See *Leonis imperatoris tactica* (in: *Patrologia Graeca* 107, 672-1120), Epilog, lvii, lxiv. The better edition by R. Vári, *Leonis imperatoris tactica* I (proem., const. i-xi); II (const. xii-xiii, xiv, 1-38) (*Sylloge Tacticorum Graecorum* III, Budapest 1917-1922), was unfortunately never completed, and this section is not included.

radical transformation, producing the pattern of provincially-based and recruited
forces referred to as *themata*. We cannot go into the debate on the military lands
here, nor pursue the question of the extent to which the *themata*, as a term for
military forces based in the provinces, were effective[3]. But methods of recruitment
were not just limited to a hereditary obligation related in some way to an
independent (usually landed) income, an impression sometimes given by some of the
modern literature. On the contrary, the state always made use of a range of options,
and it is the question of why one particular option dominated at a given moment
that should concern us. At the height of the process of provincialised recruitment
and maintenance of troops, for example, during the eighth and first half of the ninth
centuries, there is plenty of evidence to show that voluntary recruitment to both
elite and provincial forces, compulsory levies in the provinces, and the attraction of
non-Byzantine mercenaries co-existed, and were involved according to the
requirements of the moment. And this sort of question immediately raises other,
related issues, about the nature of power-relations between central power-elite and
provinces, for example, or about the systems for the extraction, re-distribution and
consumption of resources in men and materials. It is to these latter issues that I now
wish to turn[4].

Throughout the period in question the state continued to be able to raise
substantial expeditionary forces. Armies led by the emperors of the ninth and tenth
centuries –Basil I, Nikephoros II, John Tzimiskes, for example– may have numbe-
red on occasion as many as 50,000 soldiers, perhaps more, although such figures
seem to be exceptions, and there is a great deal of disagreement among historians
on the issue, given the often contradictory and partial sources. On the whole,
Byzantine and Arab armies were really quite small compared with the armies

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3. See the valuable discussion of W. E. Kaegi, «Some Reconsiderations on the Themes (Seventh-
Ninth Centuries)», *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 16 (1967), pp. 39-53.

4. Recent overviews and discussions of these issues: W. E. Kaegi, «Byzantine Logistics: Problems
and Perspectives», *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed.
J. A. Lynn, Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1993, pp. 39-55 and Idem, «The Capability of the Byzantine
Army for Military Operations in Italy», *Teodorico e i Goti tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. A. Carile,
Ravenna 1995, pp. 79-99; J. F. Haldon, «The Army and the Economy: the Allocation and Redistribution
of Surplus Wealth», *Mediterranean Historical Review* 7/2 (1992), pp. 133-153; and «Military Service,
Military lands and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», *Dumbarton Oaks
Papers* 47 (1993), pp. 1-67 (repr. in *State, Army and Society in Byzantium: Approaches to Military,
Social and Administrative History, 6th-12th Centuries*, London, Variorum Reprints, 1995, VI, VII). See
also idem, «Pre-Industrial States and the Distribution of Resources: The Nature of the Problem», in
Averil Cameron, L. A Conrad, eds., *States, Resources and Armies. Papers of the Third Workshop on
Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, Princeton 1995, pp. 1-25. General discussions: M. Van Crefeld,
*Supplying War: Logistics from Wallerstein to Patton*, Cambridge 1977; and the chapter «Logistics and
Supply», in J. Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, London 1993, pp. 301-315.

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mustered in late medieval and early modern times, and all the exact figures we can derive from the sources confirm this impression[5]. But while the question of the numbers of the individual units, as well as that of the total of soldiers available for active service at any given time remain debated, there is no doubt that large numbers of men and materials could be mobilised fairly rapidly, and that this involved a major administrative effort and a complex process which the central government had to manage and to co-ordinate[6].

Military activities and expeditions can be very crudely divided into defensive and offensive operations. But the differences in scale between a major imperial attack against enemy territory, and a small-scale defensive operation or a raid require very different levels of organisation and can be supported through vastly different means. In the following, we will examine briefly the basic processes in both cases.

We are fortunate in that an important text, or group of texts, survives from a tenth-century compilation, which throws a good deal of light on the expeditionary practices of the second half of the ninth and the tenth centuries. These documents, which seem to incorporate material from the reign of Basil I, as well as from the middle of the tenth century, were incorporated eventually into the manuscript of what is now known as the *De Caerimoniis* or the *Ekthesis tês basileiou taxeôs*, probably by accident by a later compiler; and concern aspects of the organisation of an imperial expedition, which is to say, one in which the emperor himself participates. Two of the documents are based on an earlier treatise ascribed to the *magistros* Leo Katakylas, and supposedly commissioned by Leo VI. While it is

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5. See most recently the sensible comments of J.-C. Cheynet, «Les effectifs de l'armée byzantine aux Xe-XIe s.», *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, Xe-XIIIe siècles* 38/4 (1995), pp. 319-335; and the discussion in W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army 284-1081*, Stanford 1995, p. 43ff. For some figures from tenth-century sources, see J. F. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians: an Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata, c. 580-900* (Poikila Byzantina 3), Bonn 1984, pp. 629-633, where relatively low figures are suggested, borne out by the figures from the two expeditionary forces sent to Crete in 911 and 949 – respectively totalling just over 17,000 (excluding oarsmen) and just over 10,000 (although the complete tally of soldiers for the 949 expedition is not given); see *De Cerimoniis*, 651.14-656.18; 664.7-669.14. Field armies of 3,000-8,000 cavalry plus infantry, perhaps giving an absolute maximum of as many as 25,000 soldiers, can be adduced from the military treatises of the second half of the tenth century (see note 8 below). See the useful comments in M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600-1025*, London 1996, pp. 181-193, casting considerable, and justifiable doubt, on the ways in which figures given in the Arab geographers' accounts, have been interpreted. See also F. Winkelmann, «Probleme der Informationen des al-Garmi über die byzantinischen Provinzen», *Byzantinoslavica* 43 (1982), pp. 18-29; and J. F. Haldon, Kudâma Ibn Dja'far and the Garrison of Constantinople, *Byzantion* 48 (1978) pp. 78-90.

6. I will be taking up the issues discussed in the present article in more detail, along with a number of other aspects of Byzantine military organisation, in my forthcoming book *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World (sixth-fifteenth century)*, UCL Press, London 1999.

dangerous to generalise from a context in which an emperor might be involved, the documents nevertheless provide a wealth of valuable information[7]. In addition to these texts, there survive also a further group of documents which appear to originate in the *stratiôtikon logothesion*, namely those relating to a series of military expeditions to Italy and to Crete in the period between 911 and 949. These provide statistical data and details of equipment, expenses, methods of raising manpower, as well as of the complements of warships and transports. While the figures given in the texts are clearly corrupted in one or two cases, and the whole must be used with considerable caution, they again provide invaluable information on the administrative arrangements and structure of expeditionary forces at this period. In addition to this material, a number of practical handbooks or *stratêgika* survive from the tenth century, which include important information about armies on campaign[8]. Together with incidental references in histories and hagiographies, as well as the evidence from letters and from sigillographical material, it is possible to piece together a picture of how the middle Byzantine state set about organising, funding and equipping a major campaign army.

But there is additional evidence which can be drawn upon, for it is clear from this middle Byzantine material that the fundamental constraints operating in the ninth to eleventh centuries were very similar to those operating in the fifth and sixth centuries; and that it is, in consequence, possible to use the evidence from the Codex Iustinianus and the Novels of emperors from this earlier period to help

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7. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, Introduction, text, translation, commentary by J. Haldon (CFHB 28), Vienna 1990.

8. The key texts are the mid-tenth-century treatise on skirmishing or guerilla tactics, written by a close associate of the Phokas clan; and an anonymous treatise on campaign organisation, dating probably from the reign of John Tzimiskes or Basil II. See G. Dagron, H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*, Texte établi par Gilbert Dagron et Haralambie Mihăescu, trad. et comm. par G. Dagron, Paris 1986, (text pp. 28-135); Eng. trans. and edn.: G. T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, Text, transl. and notes (CFHB 25 = DOT 9), Washington D. C. 1985, pp 137-239 (text pp. 144-238); and *Incerti scriptoris Byzantini saec. X. liber De Re Militari*, ed. R. Vári, Leipzig 1901; Eng. trans. and edn.: *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, ed. and trans. G. T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, pp. 241-335 (text pp. 246-326). In addition to these three, other handbooks contain some material of relevance: the late ninth- early tenth-century Tactica of Leo VI, referred to already; the mid-tenth-century *Sylloge taktikôn*: see A. Dain, ed., *Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim «inedita Leonis Tactica» dicebatur*, Paris 1938; the so-called praecepta militaria ascribed to Nicephorus II and the *Tactica* of the general Nikephoros Ouranos. The former is edited by I. Kulakovskij, *Nicephori praecepta militaria e codice Mosquensi*, in: *Zapiski Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk*, viii ser., 7 (1908) no. 9; and by E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth. Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (DOS XXXIII), Washington D. C. 1995, pp. 3-59 (text), pp. 61-78 (notes) (cited here). Chapter 56-65 of the latter are now edited in McGeer, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-163 (text), pp. 165-167 (notes); chapters 63-74 are edited by J.-A. de Foucault, «Douze chapitres inédits de la Tactique de Nicéphore Ouranos», *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), pp. 281-312.

reconstruct the structures of the later period. We shall deal with the various aspects in the formation of a military expedition under several separate headings: first, the means whereby a campaign was supplied and supported; second, the methods through which soldiers were recruited and equipped; and third, the relationship between the armies and the provincial populations.

First, then, the process whereby an expedition was supplied with provisions, materials and shelter. According to the treatise on military expeditions compiled by the *magistros* Leo Katakylas, and referring almost certainly to the campaign practice of the emperor Basil I[9], it is noted that the *prôtonotarios* of each *thema* through which the imperial force passes must provide certain supplies in kind from the *aerikon* and the *synônê*. If this is not sufficient, then the *prôtonotarios* should obtain the necessary produce from the *eidikon*[10]. The passage is compressed and by itself difficult to interpret in more than a very general sense, but this account is supplemented by a slightly different version of the process in a much extended and re-worked version of the treatise compiled at the behest of Constantine VII himself, perhaps in the 950s[11].

These two passages describe in effect a process very close indeed to that set out in Novel 130 of the emperor Justinian. According to these sixth-century regulations, the provincial officials are to be given advance notice of the army's requirements in foodstuffs and other goods, which are to be deposited at named sites along the route of march. The materials, food supplies and other requirements demanded by the provincial authorities on behalf of the central government were referred to as *embolê*, and meant simply that part of the regular tax assessment owed by each tax-payer (whether an estate, an individual peasant freeholder, or whatever) not paid in coin. Exact records of the produce supplied by the taxpayers as *embolê* were to be kept and reckoned up against the annual tax owed in this form; if more supplies were provided than were due in tax, then the extra was to be supplied by the tax-payers, but this was then *to be paid for*, at a *fixed rate* established by the appropriate state officials, out of the cash revenues already collected in the regular yearly assessment of that particular province. In other words what was known as a *coemptio* in Latin, or *synônê* in Greek, was applied. If the provincial treasuries in question had insufficient local cash revenues left over to pay for these extra supplies, then they were to be paid for instead either from the general bank of the praetorian prefecture, in other words, the *coemptio* was still

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9. See Const. Porph., *Three Treatises*, p. 54 ff.

10. *Ibid.*, (B) 101-106.

11. *Ibid.*, (C) 347-358.

applied; or they were to be collected anyway and then their value (at the prices fixed by the state) deducted from the following year's assessment in kind[12].

The account in the two versions of the treatise on expeditions, which describes the situation in the ninth and tenth centuries, is similar: the thematic *prôtonotarios* is to be informed in advance as to the army's requirements, which are to be provided from the land-tax in kind and the cash revenues of the *thema* and stored at appropriate points along the route of march. An exact account of the supplies is to be kept, so that (where the thematic tax-payers provided more then their yearly assessment demands) the amount can be deducted (from the assessment for the following year). Both passages note that, where supplies cannot be paid for out of the local fiscal revenues, the cash (or the supplies – the text does not specify which, although the former would be far more likely) is to be taken from the bureau of the *eidikon*, just as in the sixth century the cash was taken from the general bank of the prefecture. The second text notes that the final accounts are worked out, after the expedition has been stood down, in the *eidikon*[13].

It is clear from these texts that the basic fiscal mechanisms in the sixth and the ninth centuries were almost identical: the terminology had changed, and the administrative relationships between the different departments responsible for the procedure was slightly different, but in essentials the later system was very obviously derived from the earlier. The process by which the evolution of the later process out of the earlier occurred nicely illustrates the degree of systemic continuity between late Roman and middle Byzantine practices. In fact, there are a number of other issues which are connected with these developments, notably the change in meaning of the word *synônê*, although I will not pursue that issue here[14]. The question of the thematic *prôtonotarioi* is worth attention, however, for this official appears only during the first half of the ninth century (or possibly in the last years of the eighth)[15]. His role in the later ninth century, as a thematic

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12. See CI X, 27.2 (a. 491-505) (*Codex Iustianianus,* ed. P. Krüger [CIC II. Berlin 1919]). See A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602. A Social Economic and Administrative Survey,* Oxford 1964, p. 235; and Just., Nov. cxxx, 1-5 (Iustiniani Novellae [CIC III. Berlin 1928]).

13. Const. Porph., *Three Treatises* (B) 101-106; (C) 347-358.

14. On the *synônê,* see J. F. Haldon, «Synônê: Re-Considering a Problematic Term of Middle Byzantine Fiscal Administration», *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994), pp. 116-153 (repr. in *State, Army and Society in Byzantium,* VIII); with Idem, «Aerikon/aerika: a Re-Interpretation», *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 44 (1994), pp. 135-142.

15. The *prôtonotarios* was clearly the link between the provincial thematic fiscal administration and the centre. He belonged to the department of the *sakellion* (see N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe-Xe siècles,* [Paris 1972], p. 315; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises,* p. 167 and 236); but he works with the *eidikon,* as is clear from these texts, as well as, presumably, with officials who could relay his needs to the local *dioikêtai* and other officials of the

representative of the *sakellion*, has been discussed already; but he seems to have replaced earlier officials, *eparchoi*, who were the successors of the ad hoc praetorian prefects despatched by the department of the Praetorian Prefect in the fifth and sixth centuries, responsible for liaising between the army and its demands, on the one hand, and the provincial fiscal officials in whose area the army was operating, on the other[16]. These officials seem still to have been functioning in the 840s, although it is clear that they were being replaced by the *prôtonotarioi* by that time[17]. Whatever the exact details of the administrative changes –one of which certainly involved an extension of the supervisory authority of the thematic *stratêgoi*– the continuity in the structures of supplying field forces between the sixth and ninth century is undeniable, and we may reasonably assume that they applied also to the earlier ninth and eighth centuries.

The documents dealing with the preparations for the expeditions to Crete and Italy can now be used to fill in some of the details of the system I have just outlined. Fragments of four documents survive, incorporated into the second part of the *De Cerimoniis*, probably intended originally for a separate dossier on military expeditions, perhaps that which would also originally have included the three

*genikon*, responsible for the general land-tax and related state demands. This was most probably done by officials of the thematic *chartoularios*, an officer of the *stratiôtikon logothesion*, who, it is assumed, held the lists of registered soldiers in the *thema* and who would in the normal course of events have to liaise with the *dioikêtai* in respect of that element of the thematic army not maintained through its own resources. On the different fiscal departments mentioned here, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises*, p. 168 and 236 with literature; and Oikonomidès, *Listes*, p. 313 ff.

16. For the question of the thematic *prôtonotarioi*, see e. g., G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft xii, 1.2 = Byzantinisches Handbuch 1.2), Munich ³1963), pp. 205-206, and esp. E. Stein, «Ein Kapitel vom persischen und vom byzantinischen Staate», *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 1 (1920), pp. 50-89, 79ff, followed by e. g. W. E. Kaegi, «Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions», *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982), pp. 87-113, 109 ff. For a slightly different interpretation see J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: the Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990, chapt. 5.

17. For the first references to thematic *prôtonotarioi*, see Ignatius diac., Epp. (*The Correspondence of Ignatios the Deacon*, ed. C. Mango, S. Efthymiadis, [CFHB 39 = DO Texts XI], Washington 1997), nos. 7, 8 (the *spatharios* Nikolaos); Theod. Stud., Epp. (*Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, ed. G. Fatouros [CFHB 31/1-2], Berlin-New York 1992), no. 500 (the *prôtospatharios* Hesychios), both dated to the 820s. See also *V. Ioannicii*, 368A (Acta Sanctorum Nov. ii/1, 384-434 [BHG 936]) (for the reign of Theophilos, 829-841); (*La vita retractata et les miracles posthumes de saint Pierre d'Atroa*, ed., trad. et comm. V. Laurent [Subsid. hag. 31, Brussels 1958] [BHG 2365]) p. 125 (for the reign of Michael II, 820-829). For seals, see F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (BBA 53, Berlin 1985), pp. 120-121, 122 ff with full lists. But note Winkelmann's comment, p. 24, regarding the fact that Zacos and Veglery based their dating of the seals of *prôtonotarioi* on the fact that they are not listed in the T. Usp. Since some *prôtonotarioi* at least existed before this time, as the letters of Ignatius and Theodore demonstrate, their dating of all the seals of *prôtonotarioi* to the period after 842/3 must be revised.

documents on imperial expeditions noted already. Document 1 is a list of the troops· and armaments for the expedition to Crete under Himerios in 911[18]. Documents 2 and 3 deal briefly with the vessels and troops sent under the *prôtospatharios* Epiphanios to the *thema* of Lombardy by Romanos I in the 8th year of the indiction (i.e. 935)[19] and the gifts sent to the King of the Lombards to encourage his support against rebels in the theme of Lombardy[20]. Document 4 presents a detailed, if jumbled account, of the armaments, costs and troops sent on the expedition to Crete in 949[21].

Documents 1, 2 and 4, and especially 1 and 4, provide an enormous wealth of information, and a proper analysis of their contents, the internal contradictions they contain, and the technical language in which they are written would far surpass the limits of this paper. But it is possible to summarise briefly what they tell us about the organisation of an expedition. In the first place, it is clear that in addition to the regular supplies to be provided by the thematic *prôtonotarioi*, extra supplies in foodstuffs and in kind had to be raised. The large amounts of coined gold and silver required seem to have been supplied through the *eidikon*, for the fitting out of the ships involved, and from the other revenue –producing departments through the *sakellarios*, whose supervisory capacity permitted him to exercise a general control over expenditures[22]; the theme *prôtonotarioi* were made responsible for raising additional supplies for the expedition, working presumably with officials of

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18. Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, ed. J. J. Reiske, Bonn 1829, pp. 651.14-660.12.

19. *De Cer.*, pp. 600.13-661.6.

20. *De Cer.*, pp. 661.7-662.11.

21. *De Cer.*, pp. 664.4-678.10; with 662.11-664.2. The accounts of the expeditions have been used by several scholars to elucidate different aspects of imperial military structures, fiscal history and diplomatic history: see in particular H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Études d'histoire maritime à Byzance. À propos du thème des Caravisiens* (Bibliothèque Générale de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, VIe section), Paris 1966, pp. 91-95 (docs. 1 and 4); Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy*, p. 268 (doc. 3); and appropriate sections in Hélène Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer: la marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siècles*, Paris 1966; or E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland*, Berlin 1966.

22. *De Cer.*, p. 673. 12 ff. (for 949); the largesses and cash sums for expenses other than regular pay made to the troops are specifically mentioned as derived from the *eidikon* and administered by the *eidikos* and *sakellarios* (e. g. *Three Treatises*, [C] 261-266). The cash for the expeditionary payments was probably supervised by these two officials also, although this is nowhere explicitly stated (eg. pp. 667.12-669.14); but it could also be supplemented from the *koitôn*, under the *parakoimômenos* (see Oikonomidès, *Listes*, p. 305): see *Three Treatises*, [C] 287-289; *De Cer.*, p. 668.14-18. For the *sakellarios*, see Oikonomidès, *Listes*, p. 312. The *eidikon* was similarly the source for cash sums for other expenditure for the 949 campaign: see *De Cer.*, p. 673. 12 ff.

the *genikon*, a point supported by evidence from the earlier ninth century[23]. In certain circumstances, imperial officials were despatched to the *themata* to assist in collecting and transporting the supplies: an imperial officer –described simply as «a certain basilikos»– was sent to the Anatolikon region in 910/911 to raise barley, biscuit, corn and flour for the Kibyrrhaiot forces. Specific directions were given for the route by which it was to be transported[24]. The military officers, through their own officials, were commissioned with raising the necessary extra weapons and military equipment[25]; and the departments of the *eidikon* and the *vestiarion* appear as major repositiories and suppliers of a whole range of requirements for the fleet and the army[26]. Armies were usually accompanied by a supply-train; the late tenth-century treatise on campaign organisation stipulates a basic supply of 24 days' rations of barley for the horses, which according to other sources was similarly to be put aside by the thematic *prôtonotarios* for collection by the army en route[27]; and historians' accounts of campaigns frequently mention the baggage-train or the

23. *Ignatios diakonos,* Epp. 7.23-30; 8.10-15, for the raising of extra supplies through the *synônê* in the early ninth century; *De Cer.,* p. 658.8-16 for the supplies for the expedition to be prepared by the *prôtonotarios* of the Thrakesion theme (20,000 *modioi* of barley, 40,000 *modioi* of corn, biscuit and flour, 30,000 measures of wine, 10,000 beasts for slaughter: cf. *Three Treatises,* [C] 141 ff and p. 202 f); as well as hardware and raw materials for the warships. The ship-fitting materials were to be collected at Phygela (nr. mod. Kuşadası: see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3, p. 1672), the point of departure of the expedition.

24. *De Cer.,* p. 659.7-12. The supplies were to be delivered to Attaleia rather than to Kalon Oros.

25. *De Cer.,* p. 657.12-14 (*stratêgos* of Thessaloniki to provide 200,000 arrows, 3,000 spears, and as many shields as he could manage); p. 657.15-17 (*kritês* of Hellas to prepare 1,000 spears –which he had done– and others, to be transported wherever required); p. 657.17-20 (similar commissions to other officers in Hellas and the Peloponnese); p. 658.17-22 (the *stratêgos* of Samos was to obtain cash from the *prôtonotarios* –of his own theme, presumably– to pay for the production of nails for the ships, to be deposited at Phygela). The list continues from *De Cer.,* pp. 658.22-659.7. The production and supply of weapons seems to have been within the competence of the *eidikon*: the *archôn* of the *armamenton* played an important role in organising this productive effort: see *De Cer.,* p. 673.20 ff. and Oikonomidès, *Listes,* p. 317; Haldon, *Praetorians,* p. 318 ff. Until the Arab invasion of the seventh century, the production of weapons was managed through a series of state-run manufactories (Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* pp. 834-839 for the arms factories). These must have suffered in the following period, but in the tenth century, an arms-producing workshop at Caesarea in Cappadocia may have been operational again: imperial armourers are mentioned in a mid-tenth-century letter. See R. Cantarella, «Basilio Minimo II», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 26 (1926), pp. 3-34 (letter to the emperor Constantine VII) and see below.

26. See, e. g., *De Cer.,* pp. 672.1 ff, 676.18 ff and cf. *Three Treatises,* [C] 1341-1365. Leo the deacon refers to the transportation of military supplies, including arms, to the army setting out on the campaign against the Russians in 972: *Leo diac.* (Leonis diaconi Caloensis *Historiae libri decem,* ed. C. B. Hase, Bonn 1828), vii, 9.

27. § 21.21-23 (Dennis, p. 302f); cf. *Three Treatises,* [C] 347-352.

supplies and fodder it carried[28]. Not all these supplies were derived form the regular land-tax, however: depending on the local circumstances, much of it must also have been raised through compulsory exactions, as in the late Roman period. This was certainly the case when the emperor was present[29]. Similarly, *prôtonotarioi* of the affected themes had to provide supplies which could be transported by wagon or mule to .the army on enemy territory, if the surrounding districts had been devastated. But smalller units clearly foraged for their own fodder and supplies, whether in enemy territory or on Roman soil, which must have caused some hardship to the communities affected; while once on hostile terrain the commander must either have arranged to keep his supply-lines open by detaching small units to hold key passes and roads[30], or let the army forage for all its requirements once the supplies had run out[31]. Some incidental evidence from the contemporary historians illustrates these methods in operation[32].

The burden of supporting soldiers passing through on campaign had always been onerous, as a number of sources from the later Roman period through to the tenth century testify. This was not just because of the demands made by the army on local productive capacity, but reflected also the fact that state intervention into local exchange relations on such a large scale could adversely affect the economic equilibrium of an area. In the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries there is very clear evidence of the distortion of prices by these means: either through the state's fixing artificially low prices for the sale of produce to the army, thus harming the producers; or by sudden heavy demand driving prices, for non-state purchasers, upwards. Even more telling is the evidence of the sixth-century legislation on the situation in Thrace and the combined effects of barbarian inroads and military supply demands on the economy of the region. The establishment of the *quaestura exercitus* was aimed at resolving one element of the problem, for through the administrative linkage between the Aegean islands and coastal regions concerned with the Danube zone the troops in that theatre could be supplied from relatively wealthy productive areas by sea and river transport. Yet the problem remained

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28. E. g. Attaleiates (Michaelis Attaliotae *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1853), p. 118.4-5; 151.9 (1071). Cf. Leo diac., x, 8 (p. 171.19-21: the supplies brought by Basil II's forces are exhausted and the army has to forage in enemy territory).

29. For the fifth century see Vegetius, *Epitome rei militaris*, ed. C. Lang, Leipzig 1885, iii, 3; for the tenth-century, *Three Treatises*, (C) 557-559.

30. *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, §§21, 36-42 (Dennis, p. 302f).

31. *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, §§21, 32; *De vel. bell.*, 16.1 (Dagron/Mihăescu, p. 93; Dennis, p. 200). See the reference to Basil II's supplies running out in 975 (n. 28 above).

32. See, for example, the reference to the organisation of supplies for the campaign against the Rus in 972; *Leo diac.*, vii, 9.

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acute enough for Maurice to attempt to have his armies winter on the non-Roman side of the river in 593 and 602[33]. Leo VI advised generals to carry sufficient supplies with the army and to forage on enemy territory rather than prey upon the citizens of the empire[34]; the need to avoid harming the provincials by permitting the army to forage and extract supplies without proper administrative controls is often repeated –although even where such controls were established, the presence of a large force of soldiers, their animals and their followers will rarely have been welcome[35]. The provincial administrators do seem to have tried to minimise the effects of passing military forces, and one should not over-exaggerate the problem. But several letters of the ninth-tenth centuries appeal to state officials against the burden imposed upon them, or their clients, through the imposition of *mitaton* and related expenses; these are on several occasions related explicitly to the effects of the presence of soldiers on campaign. And while we must allow for some degree of hyperbole on the part of the more privileged and literate elements in society, some of the complaints are on behalf of those less fortunate than the writers themselves[36].

II

One of the factors rarely discussed in this context is the rate of march of Byzantine forces[37], the amount of supplies that would be needed, the carrying capacity of the pack-animals accompanying an expedition, and the feed and fodder

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33. See esp. P. De Jonge, «Scarcity of Corn and Cornprices in Ammianus», *Mnemosyne* 4 ser., 1 (1948), pp. 238-245; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, p. 629, on the effects of the presence of a large expeditionary force at Edessa in 503 and 504 (while an exception, the example is nevertheless useful in giving some idea of the problem the presence of a large army created); and 630, for the evidence for price-fixing. For Thrace, see CI X, 27.10 (a. 491-505). On compulsory purchase and fixed prices see Haldon, «Synônê». For the *quaestura exercitus*, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, p. 482f, and for Maurice's order and the context, see Kaegi, *Military Unrest*, pp. 106-113.

34. *Tactica*, ix, 1-3; xvii, 36.

35. E. g. Maurice, *Strat.*, i, 9 (*Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. T. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg [CFHB 17], Vienna 1981).

36. The wealthy and powerful were most likely to succeed in gaining exemption: cf. a letter of the general Nikêphoros Ouranos to the *kritês* of the *Thrakêsion* theme appealing for exemption from *mitaton*, which he claimed was crippling his household (J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* [Archives de l'Orient chrétien 6], Paris 1960, no. 42.241-242); or the letter of the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos on behalf of the widow of a *drouggarios* of the *Vigla*: *Epistoliers*, no. 31.120-121. See especially Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, L. G. Westerink (Dumbarton Oaks Texts II) Washington D. C. 1973, nos. 92. 10-26; 94. 31-40 (extraordinary impositions for the Bulgarian war); 150; 183 (concerning the imposition of military burdens and renewed general imposition of extraordinary levies on Church lands and clerics).

37. Two exceptions are J. Nesbitt, «The Rate of March of Crusading Armies in Europe. A Study and Computation», *Traditio* 19 (1963), pp. 167-181, and McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 340-341. I have avoided here the issue of the extent to which wheeled vehicles were used in transporting

required in turn for the baggage train. Although one obvious reason is the relative dearth of hard evidence, it is possible to arrive at some fairly reliable figures in respect of some of these questions, and on this basis to obtain some idea of the effects on the regions through which the armies passed.

Nikephoros Phokas considered a march of 16 miles (approx. 24 km.) to be both long and tiring for men and horses[38] and although this rate could have been maintained as an average in some cases, terrain, weather and the quality of the roads, tracks or paths used by the army will all have played a role, so that very considerable variations must have been usual[39]. The average length of a day's march for infantry of combined forces was probably rarely more than twelve-fourteen miles, which has been an average for most infantry forces throughout recorded history; and this figure would more often than not be reduced if very large numbers, which had to be kept together, were involved[40]. The average can be increased when no accompanying baggage train is present[41]; and increased yet

Byzantine military (or indeed non-military) supplies and goods. In general, the evidence suggests that wheeled transport was used on a less widespread basis after the sixth century, partly in response to the decline in the maintenance of hard road surfaces attested by archaeological data from some urban contexts. On the other hand, imperial expeditionary forces clearly were accompanied by wagons or carts on occasion: see the account and analysis of the 1176 campaign under Manuel I in R.-J. Lilie, «Die Schlacht von Myriokephalon (1176)», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 35 (1977), pp. 257-275, where some 3,000 wagons carried the imperial bagggage and siege-equipment. For some useful discussion, see R. W. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel*, Cambridge, Mass. 1975.

38. *De vel. bell.*, 13.2 (Dagron/Mihăescu, p. 79; Dennis, p. 189). Horses can move more rapidly and cover much greater distances than this, of course, and Phokas' figure must assume that the horses áre carrying more than simply their riders.

39. See the discussion in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 340-341.

40. See McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 341; Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, p. 29; and especially D. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, Berkeley 1978, pp. 154-156, for detailed figures and averages derived from the marches of Alexander's army across Greece, Anatolia, Iran and into northern India. Two crucial points emerge very clearly: the speed at which large forces can move varies very considerably according to the terrain: anything between 7 or 8 miles per day and 18 or 20. Cavalry by themselves can cover distances of up to 40 or 50 miles, provided the horses are regularly rested and well nourished and watered. Small units can move much faster than large divisions: distances of up to 30 miles per day for infantry can be attained. The average marching speeds for infantry are 3 miles per hour on even terrain, 2.5 on uneven or broken/hilly ground. See esp. C. Neumann, «A Note on Alexander's March Rates», *Historia* 20 (1971), pp. 196-198; and F. Maurice, «The Size of the Army of Xerxes in the Invasion of Greece, 480 B. C.», *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 50 (1930), pp. 210-235, at 229.

41. As for Roman troops carrying most of their immediate requirements in equipment and provisions, where 20 Roman miles per 5 hours (18.4 miles), on metalled roads or good tracks, and in good weather, was normal. A faster pace, intended to cover 24 Roman miles in 5 hours, was also practised: see Vegetius, *Epitome rei militaris*, i, 9 and G. Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, London 1969, pp. 54-55, for further discussion and evidence. Watson concludes that these times must also have included

again for forced marches, although there is an inverse relationship between the length and speed of such marches and the loss of manpower and animals through exhaustion[42]. The distance at which supply dumps could be established or stops made to feed and water men and animals was also directly related to the distance covered in a day's march and how much provisions and water could be carried before re-supply was necessary[43].

In hostile territory, light cavalry scouts were sent ahead to spy out the army's line of march, the position of enemy forces and fortifications, the availability of wood and water, fodder and food, and were responsible for providing the commanders of the Roman forces with sufficient information for them to plan their route and the marching camps[44]. In Roman territory, in contrast, the route of march for large forces was generally prepared in advance and supplies provided through the activities of the local *prôtonotarios* of each district affected. Large concentrations of provisions seem to have been deposited at a few key locations, in granaries or storehouses according to the ninth-century report of Ibn Khurradadhbih, from which they were collected by the army and loaded onto pack-animals, carts and the soldiers themselves as they passed through[45]. This is clearly

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resting periods in every hour to permit the speed represented in these figures. For more recent examples, cf. some of the campaigns of Frederick II of Prussia in 1757-1758: Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, pp. 28-29.

42. Cf. the example quoted by McGeer of Basil II's forced march in 995 from Constantinople to relieve Aleppo: see J. H. Forsyth, *The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya b. Said al-Antaki*, Diss. Univ. Michigan 1977, p. 492ff. The emperor set out with a force of 40,000: the journey, normally taking some 60 days, was completed in a quarter of the time, but only 17,000 men and their mounts or pack-animals arrived at Aleppo. Horses need regular rest and regular breaks for grazing (at least one day in six, or the equivalent), if they are not to develop sores and damage to their feet and backs, such that they are temporarily (and if not rested and cared for, permanently) useless. The drop-out rate in Basil's forces was probably due in large part to these factors. See F. Smith, «The Relationship between the Weight of a Horse and its Weight-Carrying Power», *Journal of Comparative Pathology and Therapeutics* 11 (1898), pp. 287-290; Idem, *A Manual of Veterinary Hygiene*, N. York 1906, p. 144 ff; Maurice, «The Size of the Army of Xerxes», p. 212.

43. The marching camps of the general Agricola during his campaign in eastern Scotland in A. D. 83-84 were established at distances of between 10 and 13 miles apart: see D. J. Breeze, «The Logistics of Agricola's Final Campaign», *Talanta* 16-19 (1987-1988), pp. 7-22; although this represents strategical requirements in respect of maintaining lines of communication as well.

44. Evidence and discussion in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 331-332, 211-212, 300-302.

45. See Abû'l-Kâsim 'Ubayd Allâh b. 'Abd Allâh b. Khurradadhbîh, «Kitâb at-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik», *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, ed. M.-J. De Goeje, Leyden, 1870ff; nunc continuata consultantibus R. Blachère (etc.) (Leyden 1938ff), VI, Fr. transl. 76-85, at 83 (discussing the way in which the land tax was collected: a cash payment based on the price of grain, a tax collected in kind [grains] for the provisioning of the army, and placed in granaries or storehouses, and the *kapnikon*).

the system described in one of the tenth-century treatises on imperial military expeditions. We will return to this question below[46].

In the fifth century, it was recommended that soldiers be trained to carry a load of up to sixty Roman pounds (about 42.3 lbs/19.6 kilos)[47]. This presumably included the traditional seventeen days' worth of rations[48], although regulations in the *Codex Theodosianus* state that soldiers on the march should carry twenty days' worth of rations with them. But there is some question as to whether this amount was regularly carried by the troops, except when rapid movement was required in hostile territory: in Roman territory the greater part was probably transported by accompanying pack-animals[49], a point borne out in the late sixth century *Stratêgikon*, which also recommends that cavalry soldiers carry three to four days' supply with them in their saddle bags[50].

Rations were consumed on a three-day rotation in the late Roman period: *bucellatum* (hard tack) for 2 days in 3, bread for 1 day in 3, salt pork for 1 day in 3, mutton for 2 days in 3, wine and sour wine on alternate days; as well as a number of additional substances such as fish, cheese and oil, depending on context and availability[51]. The amount (weight) of such rations varied, but the figure of 1 lb (11. 28 oz/327 g) of meat and/or 2-3 lbs (1.41 lbs/654 g-2.1 lbs/981 g) of bread *per diem* per man given in one document for stationary troops seems to have been standard into the seventh century in Egypt; and there is no reason to doubt that, however it was actually made up (and whether or not the rotation of provisions was maintained beyond the first half of the seventh century), this figure represented a constant in the preceding and following periods[52]. Given that the meat element would be

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46. *Three Treatises*, (C) 347-352.

47. See Vegetius, *Epitome rei militaris*, i, 19.

48. Cf., for example, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Works*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe, 3 vols., London-Cambridge, Mass. 1935-1937, xvii, 9.2.

49. See Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, pp. 62-66 for figures and evidence.

50. Cf. Maurice, *Strat.*, i, 9.2 and v, 4: troops camped between 6 and 10 days' march from the enemy should take 20-30 lbs of hard tack each when they march to battle: and i, 2.4 for the saddle bags.

51. *CTh.* vii, 4.4 (a. 361); 5; 6; 11 (a. 360) (*Codicis Theodosiani libri xvi cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis*, edd. Th. Mommsen, P. Meyer et al. Berlin 1905).

52. P. Oxy. 2013-4 (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, edd. B.P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt et al., London 1898f). See J. Gascou, «La table budgétaire d'Antaeopolis (P. Greer 08.45 c-d)», *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin 1: IVe-VIIe siècle*, Paris 1989, pp. 279-313, at 290-292; and see Jones, *LRE*, p. 629 for higher figures for soldiers in garrison. It is important to stress that the size of the *annonae* and *capita* issued to stationary or garrison troops as pay in the late Roman period (whether in kind or as cash commutations) reflected not simply what the soldiers and their animals consumed, but also an allowance for dependents. They were thus not subsistence issues, but what have been referred to as «distribution allowances»: see L. Foxhall, H. A. Forbes, «Sitometreia: The Role of Grain as a Staple Food in Classical Antiquity», *Chiron* 12 (1982), pp. 41-90, esp. 73. We should thus assume a substantial difference between

reduced to a minimum or to nothing under most campaigning conditions, this may seem too little to provide adequate nutrition, in view of the relatively low protein element in grain. But ancient strains of wheat and barley had considerably higher protein content than modern strains, so that –regardless of the protein loss inevitable in the process of baking milled grain to produce bread or biscuit– the bread ration of soldiers in ancient and medieval times provided adequate nutrition even without meat[53].

This campaign ration would give the maximum sixty-(Roman) pound load per man for about twenty days; although under normal marching conditions much of the individuals' supplies would be transported by pack-animal or wagon, as noted above[54]. A fifteen-thousand man army would thus require a minimum of some 900,000 (Roman) lbs (i.e. 634, 500 lbs or 288, 400 kilos) of provisions, excluding drinking water/wine and necessary «extras», such as lard and/or oil, cheese or fish, and so on, and not including fodder for the horses and the pack-animals, for a period of between two and, in exceptional cases, three weeks. Assuming an average rate of march for infantry and cavalry together of between twelve and fourteen miles per day in good conditions (an optimistically high figure compared with the majority of known military marches from pre-industial contexts)[55], such a force could thus travel some 240-280 miles in a three-week march, which provides a very crude guide to the distances at which supply dumps would have had to be established in

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the minimal subsistence rations issued to soldiers on campaign, and those issued to troops in peacetime: the *capitum* issued to cavalry soldiers in the mid-sixth-century at Antaeopolis in Egypt amounted to some 12 lbs/5.4 kg per day, for example: see Gascou, «La table budgétaire d'Antaeopolis», p. 294; and the discussion with further literature in C. E. P. Adams, «Supplying the Roman Army: *O. Petr.* 245», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 109 (1995), pp. 119-124, at 122. The consumption of bread per soldier per day while on campaign was still assessed at 2 lbs per head in the European wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth century; see Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, pp. 24, 34; and the useful analysis in V. Aksan, «Feeding the Ottoman Troops on the Danube, 1768-1774», *War and Society* 13/1 (1995), pp. 1-14. Similar figures obtained for the Macedonian forces under Alexander as well as, more recently, US soldiers during the American civil war. See the discussion with literature in Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, pp. 123-126. The rate at which the newly-installed Muslim soldiers were paid in kind in Syria, Palestine and Egypt in the years immediately after the conquest seems to reflect the minimal basic ration for individual soldiers, of between 2-3 lbs of wheat (rather than baked bread) per day (in Egypt), somewhat less in Syria, plus an allowance of oil, vinegar and honey: see the documents cited in P. Mayerson, «An Additional Note on Rouzikon (Ar. *rizq*)», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 107 (1995), pp. 279-281.

 53. In general on grains and the areas where the different strains were produced, see the relevant sections in K. D. White, *Roman Farming*, London 1970, and on nutritional values, P. J. Reynolds, *Iron-Age Farm: the Butser Experiment*, London 1979.

 54. See *Praecepta*, ii.1.

 55. See Nesbitt, art. cit.: and cf. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, p. 112f.

advance. This figure is confirmed by the tenth-century treatise on campaign organisation, which notes that «it is not feasible, in turn, for an army to transport more than a twenty-four days' supply of barley from its own country for its horses», which suggests the recognised maximum period for a cavalry force[56].

Such a rate of march, of course, excludes wheeled vehicles, so that the amount of fodder required by pack-animals would itself add enormously to the supply problem. Horses and mules require considerably more in weight of provisions than soldiers, and are relatively economically inefficient animals, requiring proportional to their carrying capacity a much greater weight of supplies than men. Roman military mounts required something in the order of 20 lbs (9kg) of fodder per day under non-campaign conditions: some 5-6 lbs (2.2-2.7 kg) barley and a further 10-15 lbs (4.5-6.8 kg) hay or grazing[57]. The area required for grazing depended on

56. *Campaign Organisation and tactics*, § 21. 22-23 (trans. Dennis, p. 302f). Ibn Khurradadhbih notes (Fr. transl., p. 85): «there is no market in the Roman camp. Each soldier is obliged to bring from his own resources the biscuit, oil, wine and cheese that he will need».

57. See Ann Hyland, *Equus. The Horse in the Roman World*, London 1990, p. 90. She underestimates the amount of barley required, however: the figures given in *P. Oxy.* XVI 2046 (6th century) are 1/10 *artaba* of barley and 1/6 of a load of hay per horse. The relationship between the *artaba* and the *modios* varies in the sources for the late Roman period, most information coming from Egyptian documents. See R. P. Duncan-Jones, «The Size of the Modius Castrensis», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 21 (1976), pp. 53-62. The Byzantine *annonikos modios* was equal to 26.6 Roman pounds = 18.6 lbs/8.5 kg; but there was also a larger *basilikos modios* (40 Roman pounds = 28.2 lbs/12.8 kg), as well as a range of smaller *modii* in use in Egypt and elsewhere in the late Roman period. At the rate of 1 Roman/Byzantine pound = 11.2-3 oz. or approx. 320-27 g., and using an *artaba: modios* ratio of 1:3.3 (to be preferred, as that used in the Egyptian military *annona* and also, as we shall see, fitting better with the figures from the tenth-century document for the loads of the pack-animals), we arrive at a figure substantially higher than that quoted by Hyland. One tenth of 3.3 *modioi* of 26.5 Roman pounds each= 8.7 Roman pounds = 6.1 lbs or 2.78 kg, rather than the 3.5 lbs/1. 59 kg suggested by Hyland. As a result, Hyland's figures for grain feed need revising upward by some 50%.

All the figures presented here must be treated with caution, of course, especially since units of measurement such as the *capitum*, which represented a specific unit of ration, also functioned as a measure, of uncertain quantity, for straw; although these figures are to some extent borne out by figures in several other Egyptian documents: for example, in P. Freer 08.45 c-d (mid-sixth century), col. II, 30: 60 donkeys and 6 camels of the public post receive a total of 4,170 *modioi* of barley and 13,177 *capita* of straw, for 243.3 days. Camels consume half as much again as mules or donkeys: but very roughly this gives a daily ration of about 7.5 Roman pounds per animal for barley, which is 5.3 lbs or 2.4 kg., assuming again that the *modius castrensis* is meant, which is by no means certain.

The exact value of the *litra*, which fluctuated from 324 g. in the 4th century to 319 g. in the later Byzantine period, remains a point of discussion: see E. Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie* (Handbuch d. Altertumswiss. xii, 4 = Byz. Handbuch iv) Munich 1970, p. 174; K. Pink, *Römische und byzantinische Gewichte*, Baden bei Wien 1938, no. 21; but 327.45 g is the generally-accepted standard for the Roman pound, upon which these calculations have been based: see R. P. Duncan-Jones, «The Choenix, the Artaba and the Modius», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 21 (1976), pp. 43-52, at 52. For the value of the *artaba* in *modioi*, see *ibid.* (Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie*, 95 n. 6 is unreliable);

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several factors –quality of pasturage, seasonal variations, and so forth. Horses need at least four-five hours'grazing per day, and it has been calculated that twenty horses would graze one acre of medium-quality pasture; on campaign, they were probably fed less. They require an average of 5-8 (UK) gallons (22.75-36.4 ltr) of water (the amount varying according to heat, intensity of work etc.)[58]. The availability of grazing obviously depends upon regional and seasonal variations: where fodder had to be transported in addition to grain, mobility would be drastically limited and transport costs increased.

The mules and pack-horses of the expeditionary armies of the tenth century had to carry their own grain rations as well as the equipment or provisions for the soldiers, although the loads seem to have been strictly controlled[59]. Three categories of load are specified: (a) saddle-horses carrying a man and their own barley were loaded with four *modioi* each; (b) unridden saddle-horses carrying eight *modioi*, (c) pack-animals loaded with barley carried ten *modioi* each. But it is unclear what the wieght of the *modios* in this context should be. As we have seen, there were several *modioi*, the two most relevant for the purposes of the present calculations being the standard «imperial» *basilikos modios*, of 40 Roman pounds (28.2 lbs/12.8 kg); and the smaller *annonikos modios* assessed at two-thirds the weight of the former, i.e. 26.5 Roman pounds (18.6 lbs/8.5 kg). If we take the larger *modios*, we get the following results (excluding weights for riders, saddles and pack-saddles):

for group (a) of animals: a load of 160 Roman pounds = 112.8 lbs (51.2 kg);
for group (b) a load of 320 Roman pounds = 225.6 lbs (102.5 kg); and
for group (c) 400 Roman pounds = 282 lbs (128.18 kg).

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Gascou, «La table budgétaire d'Antaeopolis», pp. 286-287; and esp. D. Rathbone, «The Weight and Measurement of Egyptian Grains», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 53 (1983), pp. 265-275. The results of these calculations are, of course, complicated by the fact that the rations issued under the heading of *annonae* and *capita* need to be understood as maximal allowances, and not simply as the amount consumed, as noted already (see note 52 above).

58. The modern equivalent is twelve horses per acre, but this reflects different priorities for animals bred under modern conditions. See I. P. Roberts, *The Horse*, N. York 1905, p. 360ff. For water requirements: Hyland, *Equus*, p. 96; Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, p. 127.

59. *Three Treatises*, (C) 411-414. Although in more recent times, horses and mules have been loaded with a standard pack of up to 200 lbs (see, e. g., W. B. Tegetmeir, *Horses, Asses, Mules and Mule Breeding*, Washington D.C. 1897, p. 129), Roman and Byzantine allowances seem to have been smaller. For similar calculations and figures for the medieval West, see B. S. Bachrach, «Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe», *L'Uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto Medioevo* (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 31, Spoleto 1983), Spoleto 1985, pp. 707-751, at 716-720.

Taking the smaller figure, the same loads would be:

for group (a) 106 Roman pounds = 75 lbs (34 kg);
for group (b) 212 Roman pounds = 150 lbs (68 kg); and
for group (c) 265 Roman pounds = 187 lbs (85 kg)[60].

Now the approximate maximum weight a horse or mule can carry over any distance is about 250 lbs (114 kg), or in Roman/Byzantine measures, 282 pounds i.e. 7 «imperial» *modioi*, or 10.5 *annonikoi modioi*. Given that the *sagma* or pack-saddle and associated harness weighed between 50 and 60 Roman pounds (35-42 lbs/16-19 kg)[61], this would permit loads of up to about 200 lbs (91 kg), which is to say 225 Roman pounds (i.e. 5.6 *basilikoi modioi* or 8.5 *annonikoi modioi*). Bearing in mind the totals thus suggested by the figures in the tenth-century treatise on imperial expeditions, we may reasonably conclude that the measure used for loading pack-animals and, therefore, for assessing the tax collected in kind by the thematic *prōtonotarioi*, was indeed the *annonikos modios*, equivalent to the older *modius castrensis*, the lesser volume, rather than the larger «imperial» *modios* which would have impossibly overloaded the animals (and thus illustrating once again the degree of continuity in fiscal administrative practice from the late Roman period). Animals in each of the three categories in question would, in consequence, be carrying as follows (weights in modern measures):

for group (a) load: 75 lbs (34 kg), plus saddle: 40 lbs (18 kg), plus rider: 140 lbs (64 kg) = 255 lbs (116 kg);

for group (b) load: 150 lbs (68 kg), plus pack saddle: 40 lbs (18 kg) = 190 lbs (86.3 kg);

and for group (c) load: 187 lbs (84 kg), plus pack-saddle: 40 lbs (18 kg) = 227 lbs. (103.2 kg).

This is not the place to go into the question of the breeds and types of horse available in the middle Byzantine period[62]. But these are substantial burdens in view of the mean carrying capacity of the animals in question. And while horses and

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60. *Three Treatises*, (C) 549-553. For the middle and later Byzantine *modios* (there were at least four different measures thus named) see Schilbach, *Byzantinische Metrologie*, pp. 95-96, 97-108; and the literature in note 57 above.

61. See *CTh*. viii, 5.47 and *CJ* xii, 50.12. For the carrying capacity of horses, ponies and mules, see W. C. Schneider, «Animal laborans. Das Arbeitstier und sein Einsatz im Transport und Verkehr der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters», *L'Uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto Medioevo*, pp. 457-578, at 493-554.

62. For an introduction, see the useful survey of A. Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse: from Byzantium to the Crusades*, Stroud [2]1996.

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mules of the breeds most probably available in the late Roman and Byzantine world can carry up to 300 lbs (136.4 kg) for short distances, the figures given in our text represent loads for long journeys, and the concern expressed in the document regarding overloading, and punishments meted out for overloading, are not surprising, echoing similar sentiments in the late Roman legislation on the loads for animals of the *cursus publicus*[63]. It is probable that the imperial saddle horses were not constantly ridden, but led, and that when they were ridden their loads were removed. Their better ration –they received a triple ration, in contrast to the double ration issued to the other animals– may also have enabled them to bear a somewhat heavier load for short distances[64].

Since a horse will consume between 15-25 lbs per day (6.81-11.36 kg), as noted above (the lower figure being an absolute minimum requirement, the mean –20 lbs [9.09 kg]– representing the figures derived from late Roman sources, and the higher representing the feed of cavalry horses in the European theatre during the early nineteenth century)[65], of which at least 5 lbs (2.27 kg) was barley or «hard feed», the 75 lbs (34 kg) barley feed carried by the higher-quality horses for their own consumption will have been sufficient for a march of about fifteen days (75/5). The treatise (C) on imperial expeditions is quite explicit that it is barley which is to be carried, rather than hay or other fodder, as is the tenth-century treatise on campaign organisation (which reflected an interest particularly in the Balkan theatre) and it is to be supplied by the various *prôtonotarioi* of the different *themata* through which the army passes, deposited in advance according to the route planned by the commander[66]. From the descriptions in both the treatises and the historians' accounts it is clear that the normal campaigning seasons were in the spring or late summer, when pasturage would be available for the horses' grazing requirements. Special arrangements were made for the grazing of the animals of the baggage train

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63. See e. g. *CTh.* viii, 5. 8; 17; 28; 30 etc. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae* (MGH [AA)] xii, 1-385) iv, 47.5; v, 5.3, where mules are given a total burden of 110-116 lbs (50-53 kg). For late Roman and Byzantine horses, as well as the issue of Arab, Persian and steppe influence on breeds and availability, see Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse*, p. 18ff, 85ff.

64. *Three Treatises*, [C] 125, 362-363, 398-399.

65. See Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, 24; and esp. Hyland, *Equus*, p. 91. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, pp. 126-127, gives similar figures for fodder (hay and straw), but –in constrast to Hyland– greatly *overestimates* the weight of grain required, since he ignores the considerable differences between the nutritional values of the ancient grains which would have been used, and modern grains, noted already. The figures in P. Oxy. XVI 2046 give an explicit weight, upon which the present calculations are based.

66. *Three Treatises*, (C) 347-352, 549-553; *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, §21.22-23 (Dennis, pp. 302-303).

and for the imperial riding horses[67]. In Roman territory, security was less important, although grazing horses and pack-animals were supervised. In enemy territory, the perimeter of the camp was laid out to accommodate and protect all the animals. The *epeiktês*, an official on the staff of the *komês* and the *chartoularios* of the stable, was responsible for the pasturage as well as for the feed of the animals[68]. We may conclude that major supply dumps were needed at stages of approximately 200-250 miles, although under very good conditions and with smaller numbers imperial forces may have moved more rapidly than this and needed re-supplying less frequently; fast-moving cavalry forces will have been even less demanding, although ample fodder and water will have been essential. On the basis of these admittedly somewhat approximate calculations, the 1,086 pack-animals of the imperial household baggage described in the tenth-century treatise we have referred to[69] will have required a basic 5,430 gals (24,435 ltr) of water, 543 acres (280 ha) of pasture, and 5,430 lbs (2,468 kg) of barley feed per day. In practice, the amount of green fodder acreage –grazing– required will have fluctuated fairly sharply according to local conditions, while water-consumption will likewise have varied according to temperature, size of load, speed of movement and similar factors. Nevertheless, these averages give some idea of the quantities of supplies involved. A cavalry force of similar strength will have required about the same for the horses of each soldier; but we must then add supplies for re-mounts and pack-animals, so that the total provisions necessary for the animals of a fast-moving cavalry force of 1,000 men will have amounted to at least half as much again, expanded exponentially as the distance over which supplies had to be transported increased, along with the number of pack-animals thus entailed: the greater the number of pack-animals, the greater the total amount of fodder, since they will themselves have consumed a portion of their loads; the longer the journey, the greater the relative rate of consumption, until the expedition becomes a logistical impossibility[70]. Multiply these figures by (at least) fifteen for the imperial cortège alone, and the amount of provisions which each *prôtonotarios* will have had to arrange at the appropriate re-supplying points can be deduced. Where barley feed was not available for short periods, the amount of pasturage required will have increased substantially. And an expedition which set off in seasons when pasturage was not available will have needed to carry dry fodder with it, thus enormously

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67. *Three Treatises*, (C) 583-586, 605-606; McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 357, 358.

68. *Three Treatises*, (C) 395-401; McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 349-354; 358.

69. *Three Treatises*, (C) 392-394, and commentary (pp. 238f).

70. See the discussion and figures presented in Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, pp. 18-22.

increasing the overall demand for pack-animals exponentially. With these quantities in mind, and bearing in mind also the very problematic nature of many of the figures and statistics offered above, the magnitude of the administrative and logistical task facing thematic officials in filling the storehouses referred to by Ibn Khurradadhbih is nevertheless very apparent.

But travelling across Anatolia presented a number of difficulties, even before entering hostile territory. From Constantinople as far as Dorylaion, which at 972 m above sea-level is situated near the northern limit of the Anatolian plateau, fodder will have been relatively easily obtained. Thereafter, as Crusader accounts make clear, armies will have had to carry much of their provisions and fodder with them until they reached the more fertile region around Ikonion, passing through only occasional and small cultivated areas in more sheltered minor river valleys. Similar considerations apply to forces moving south-west from Koloneia towards Kaisareia, and then beyond either south-west or south-east; and then for those forces moving south-east from Ikonion towards Cilicia. These were the districts in which the role of the *prôtonotarioi* of the *themata* will have been most crucial, for without their support –and as the Crusading forces found in 1097– the collection and organising of supplies sufficient for a middling-sized force of some 5-10,000 will have been exceedingly difficult[71]. It is worth noting, in passing, that the main imperial *aplêkta* as they are listed in a garbled list of the tenth century and as confirmed by historical accounts of ninth-century campaigns, form an arc running across the north-western and northern edges of the central Anatolian plateau –at Malagina, Dorylaion and Kaborkin for the westerly route towards Amorion and then on to Ikonion; at Dazimon, Koloneia and Kaisareia for the northern route. Bathys Ryax, south-west of Koloneia and south of Dazimon was established as a base near Sebasteia for the march towards either Kaisareia or Tephrike, further to the east[72]. This arc marks the limits of what has been identified as the area most exposed to Arab raiding and attacks during the second half of the seventh and the eighth centuries, and would appear in consequence to represent a logical response

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71. See for the chief routes in particular J. G. C. Anderson, «The Road System of Eastern Asia Minor with the Evidence of Byzantine Campaigns», *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 17 (1897), pp. 22-30; W. M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, London 1890, p. 254ff; and the useful F. Stark, «Alexander's Minor Campaigns in Turkey», *Geographical Journal* 122 (1956), pp. 294-305; and for the climatic conditions, J. C. Dewdney, *Turkey, an Introductory Geography*, New York 1971, p. 50ff, 219-235; and the relevant sections in *A Handbook of Asia Minor* II, Naval Staff Intelligence Dept., London 1919. The Crusaders' experiences are summarised briefy by Hendy, *Studies*, 40-44.

72. For the *aplêkta*, see *Three Treatises*, text (A); and commentary, 155-157 for their location and further literature.

to the needs of both defending the areas beyond it, to north and west, as well as to the needs of counter-attacking forces[73]. Thereafter, fodder and supplies will have had to be trasported or collected at camps established en route, which will necessarily have been situated at the distances appropriate for the troops concerned –cavalry only, infantry only, mixed forces, and so on. And once into hostile or devastated territory, twenty-four days' supplies was the standard limit before foraging will have become unavoidable. Such logistical factors set very specific limits to the possibilities for mounting military operations.

## III

Horses and mules were raised from a variety of different sources. If the imperial household was involved, then all the main state departments, the leading civil and military officers, the metropolitanates and the monastic houses of the empire had to provide a certain number or mules or other pack-animals to transport the household and its requirements[74]. For regular non-imperial campaigns the main sources for the army were imperial stud-farms in Asia Minor[75]; requisitions from the estates of the Church[76], requisitions from secular landholders (*ekthesis* or *epidosis monoprosôpôn*, which may also have included the animals

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73. See R.-J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 22), Munich 1976, p. 189 (map) and preceding discussion.

74. *Three Treatises*, (C) 67ff and relevant commentary.

75. The *mêtata* of Asia and Phrygia are the most prominent in the middle Byzantine period (see *Three Treatises*, comm. to (C) 61ff). That from Phrygia is known especially from a late Roman inscription, according to which it was situated in the triangle formed by the small towns of Synnada, Dokimon and Polybotos. See W. H. C. Frend, «Angareia in Phrygia», *Journal of Roman Studies* 46 (1956), pp. 46-56; and also C. Foss, «Byzantine Malagina and the lower Sangarius», *Anatolian Studies* 40 (1990), pp. 161-183 (repr. in Idem, *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor*, Aldershot 1996, VII). But there seem also in the eighth and ninth centuries, at least, to have been *mêtata* in Lydia: cf. *V. Ioannicii (AS* Nov. ii/1, 332-383 [BHG 935]) 368A. Close co-operation between the *logothetês tôn agelôn*, in charge of these herds, the military logothete, the *komês tou stablou* and his representatives at Malagina, and other fiscal departments, must have been essential, and is implicit in the text (C) referred to already, compiled partly from ninth-century material during the middle years of the tenth century. See also V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin, II: L'administration centrale*, Paris 1981, pp. 289-299, 487-497. In the sixth century there had also been military stock-raising estates in Thrace as well as eastern Asia Minor (see Procopius, *De bello Vandalico*, i, 12.6; *De bello Gothico*, iv, 27.8; and *Theophyl. Sim.*, iii, 1). Imperial stud-farms in Cappadocia had raised race horses, and may have specialised in other types of animal also. The best-known such estates were the Villa Palmati, near Tyana (see O. Cuntz, ed., «Itinerarium Burdigalense», *Itineraria Romana*, Leipzig 1929, pp. 86-102, at 93), and the estate of Hermogenes in the Pontos: cf. *CTh.*, vii, 6; x, 7.6 (*CJ* xi, 76); *CTh.*, xv, 10.1.

76. Cf. *DAI* cap. 52 with commentary (p. 204f).

provided by the Church)[77]; and the soldiers themselves, who either brought their own animals or were required to purchase their requirements on the market using their salaries and campaign payments[78].

The soldiers themselves came from an equally wide range of sources, and for the period from the early ninth until the later tenth century may briefly be classified as follows. First, the regular *thematikoi* soldiers entered on the *kôdikes* held in each theme and in the military *logothesion*. These seem to have been further classified into (a) those who could actually afford to appear for duty with the requisite equipment and supplies; (b) those who could afford to pay for their service, but preferred not to serve in a personal capacity: in their case, they had to provide the equipment, provisions and the soldier (or, as an alternative, the equivalent value in cash) to send to the muster, or *adnoumion*[79]; and (c) those who could not, and had to be maintained by the thematic administration. This seems to have been done in one of three ways (or a combination thereof): through what was termed *syndosis*, whereby a number of tax-payers were grouped together and made responsible for the cost of equipping and supplying the soldier; or by making a wealthy but unwilling *stratiôtês* (from among those in category (b) mentioned already) responsible for their equipment and provisions; as well as by paying and equipping the soldiers directly through thematic or centrally-raised taxes[80]. In addition, by the middle of the tenth century, it is clear that considerable numbers of landed properties which had earlier been classified as adequate to maintain and provide a soldier had been split up due to inheritance, and that the various parcels into which the registered holding had since been subdivided were now responsible for a

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77. See *De Cer.*, p. 658.7-8; there are many examples of the term from documents of the tenth and eleventh centuries. See the brief discussion in Hélène Ahrweiler, «Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IXe-XIe siècles», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960), pp. 1-109, 5 and n. 7.

78. For soldiers purchasing their own horses or equipment with the salaries issued to them, see *De Cer.*, p. 658.4-8; and cf. *De vel. bell.*, 19.4 (Dagron/Mihăescu, p. 108; Dennis, p. 214f). On the *mêtata* see *Three Treatises*, 161-162; 184; 187.

79. Leo VI recommends that the general select the well-to-do but unwilling (military) households . and demand from them the fully-equipped soldier and his mount: Leo, *Tact.*, xviii, 129; xx. 205. Note Ahrweiler, «Recherches», p. 5 who, however, interprets the terms μὴ στρατευόμενοι and στρατεύεσθαι to mean not registered or not willing to be registered at all on the thematic *kôdikes*. In fact, it should be understood to refer to those who, while registered, were not willing to serve themselves (*strateuomenoi*) or be enlisted for the campaign in question. See Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, p. 56; «Military Service, Military Lands and the Status of Sodiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», p. 32. Instead of personal service, the wealthy *stratiôtai* registered on the *kôdikes* were to provide the resources for the person who actually fulfilled the service, the *strateuomenos* (the terminology is confusing partly because many such *strateuomenoi* might be impoverished *stratiôtai* in their own right).

80. Cf. Leo, *Tact.*, c. 717, 720f, 805; and compare c. 977.

proportional burden, paid to the local military administration to support an outsider recruited for the campaign in question. This procedure overlaps with that described under the term *syndosis* already mentioned. Most of these regular thematic troops seem to have served on a seasonal basis[81].

This system of raising and equipping soldiers evolved fairly quickly during the tenth century as the pressures on the state's resources increased in parallel to the demands of the wars of reconquest, particularly from the time of Romanos II and Nikephoros II. The Arab chronicler Ibn Hawkal describes the methods of raising troops for expeditionary forces from an outsider's perspective during the reign of Nikephoros II, which accords with much of what we can extract from the documents dealing with the Cretan expedition, and with references to earlier precedents, for example, in the provinces of the West and the Peloponnese in the time of Romanos I: each household pays a certain rate according to the type of service it has to support, the resources thus extracted going to the maintenance of a soldier or sailor. Ibn Hawkal records that from the wealthy, a mounted soldier with all his equipment was required[82]. But the central government could vary the demand: a particular cash sum from each registered household, or a contribution in livestock, cavalry mounts and equipment, and so on, could also be required[83]. This has in turn been connected with the more generalised fiscalisation of the *strateia* which seems to have been especially stimulated by the policies of Nikephoros II, as reported by Zonaras[84].

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81. This is not the place to take up these issues in detail. For recent surveys of the literature and the evidence, see R.-J. Lilie, «Die zweihundertjährige Reform: zu den Anfängen der Themenorganisation im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert», *Byzantinoslavica* 45 (1984), pp. 27-39, 190-201; Haldon, «Military Service, Military Lands and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», pp. 20-41; and M. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle. Propriété et exploitation du sol*, Paris 1992, pp. 231-249.

82. Ibn Hawkal, *La configuration de la terre [Kitab Surat al-Ard]*, trans. J. H. Kramers, E. Wiet, Beirut-Paris 1964, p. 194; and Ahrweiler, «Recherches», pp. 20-21; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, p. 61f.; Dagron, Mihǎescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla*, p. 278ff.

83. See *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando Imperio*, I; Greek text ed. Gy. Moravcsik, Eng. transl. R. J. H. Jenkins. New revised edn. (CFHB 1 = DOT 1), Washington D. C. 1967, § 51.199-204; §52; most recently discussed by N. Oikonomidès, «The Social Structure of the Byzantine Countryside in the First Half of the Xth Century», *Symmeikta* 10 (1996), pp. 105-125, esp. 108-112.

84. Zonaras (*Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri XIII usque ad XVIII*, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst, CSHB, Bonn, 1897), iii, p. 504.12-16; Cedrenus (*Compendium historiarum*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB, Bonn, 1838-1839), ii, p. 368.7-10. For the generalised fiscalisation of the *strateia*, see Zonaras, iii, pp. 505.16-506.10, and the discussion of Ahrweiler, «Recherches», pp. 22-23, and Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, p. 253ff on the implications for the differentiation between military and non-military households.

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Secondly, there were the full-time, core troops based in each *thema*, in key fortresses and with the *stratêgos* in his headquarters. These are the standing units of the thematic armies, presumably made up from registered holders of a *strateia* who were able to (or wished to) serve on a permanent basis, and from other less well-off persons in each *thema* subject to the *strateia* and registered on the military rolls, but supported by the state on a full-time basis from the income derived from the fiscalised *strateia*. All these different categories of soldier enjoyed the same privileges of military status. By the early eleventh century such regular thematic units were often also called *tagmata* (of such-and-such a district or theme)[85]. There is some debate as to how numerous these were in the eighth and ninth centuries; they may always have been paid through the methods for fiscalising *strateia* referred to already, but there was probably always an element of their pay from central resources: the tariff of pay described by Ibn Khurradadhbih[86], the fact that the state seems regularly to have despatched officers from Constantinople with the salaries of the thematic forces[87], and the fact that this was done in the later ninth century at

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85. See Zonaras, ii, p. 293 (*tagmata* of the *themata*). For ethnic/regional names for such units, see *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn [CFHB 5] Berlin-New York, 1973, pp. 487.34-488.1, for Cappadocian troops; p. 488.50-54 for Pisidian and Lycaonian contingents, the «two *tagmata* of the Anatolikoi»; p. 491.28 for *tagmata* from Koloneia and Chaldia, and p. 491.39-40 for Armenian units from Sebasteia, Melitene and Tephrike. Other examples: Cedrenus ii, p. 527.19-528.6; p. 543.17ff.; p. 660.14-20; p. 662.12-17 (indigenous *tagmata* and local *themata*); p. 694.2 and p. 692.10 (cf. Attaleiates, p. 122.7-11) –the contrast between indigenous troops and the *misthophorikon* (Franks, Uzes and others) in 1071; Attaleiates, pp. 93.7-11; 95.14-96.1; 155.6-7 (local and tagmatic troops again). For the differences in status between indigenous provincial soldiers and foreign mercenaries, see Haldon, «Military Service, Military Lands and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», pp. 61-62 n. 147. For a list of such provincial *tagmata*, with sources, see Ahrweiler, «Recherches», p. 34f. It is unclear from the language used in the sources whether the «five *tagmata* of the West» (see Attaleiates, pp. 122.7ff; 1243.8-10) are actually tagmatic units of the older type (*scholai, exkoubiton* etc.), which seems more probable (see the literature in n. 141 below) or merely regular thematic regiments. See H.-J. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 1991.

86. *Kitâb al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, Fr. transl. 84-85. This scale was based on information from the earlier writer al-Jarmi; see W. T. Treadgold, «Notes on the Numbers and Organisation of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army», *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980), pp. 269-288; Winkelmann, «Probleme der Informationen des al-Garmi über die byzantinischen Provinzen», pp. 18-29 (see note 5 above); and Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army 284-1081*, Stanford 1995, p. 64ff.

87. E. g. Theoph. (*Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols., Leipzig 1883, 1885), pp. 484-485 (for 809) and 489 (for 811), when Bulgar and Arab forces respectively captured the thematic *rhogai* despatched form Constantinople. Cf. Scylitzes, pp. 487.34-488.1; Attaleiates, p. 54.1-4 (Bryennios, the *stratêgos* of Cappadocian units in the Anatolikon, and wishing to issue a more generous payment than that offered by the emperor, seizes the imperial official sent with him, along with the pay for the soldiers).

least on a three- or four-yearly rotational basis makes this clear[88]. The relationship between these standing contingents and the thematic militias, for that is in effect what they were, remains unclear[89]. What is clear is that as the tenth century progressed the state increasingly preferred to raise cash from the commutation of military service which it could then invest in the more professional and permanent units of the themes – units which will have included the heavy cavalry referred to in the legislation of the emperor Nikephoros II[90]. It was these core elements of the thematic forces which became the *tagmata*, or permanent units, of the provinces and themes of the later tenth and eleventh centuries.

Finally, there were the troops which may broadly be defined as «mercenary» units, although these may again be subdivided into several categories, the first of which overlaps to a large extent with the previous category: (a) units made up of

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88. See Ibn Khurradadhbih, p. 84; *Three Treatises*, (C) 647-652; discussion *ibid.*, 256; Hendy, *Studies*, pp. 183-184, 646-651; Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army*, pp. 137-138; and N. Oikonomides, «Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits: Salary and Armament», *Gonimos, Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies Presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75*, eds. J. Duffy, J. Peradotto, Buffalo, N. Y. 1988, pp. 121-136. Pace Treadgold, *loc. cit.*, the fact that the text at *Three Treatises* (C) 647ff refers to the *stratêgoi* of the themes after stating that «the *themata*» were paid on this cyclical basis should not be understood to mean that it was the generals who were thus paid: on the contrary, the generals are mentioned since it was they or their *offikion* which would receive and be in charge of the distribution of the salaries in question.

89. See Lilie, «Die zweihundertjährige Reform», p. 199f; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, pp. 65-66, 76, 79; *Praetorians*, pp. 219-220. In a recent article, Martha Grigoriou-Ioannidou, «*Themata et tagmata.* Un problème de l'institution des thèmes pendant les Xe et XIe siècles», *Byzantinische Forschungen* 19 (1993), pp. 35-41, has underlined the fact that the terms *taxatoi* and sometimes *taxation* which appear frequently in the sources for the period before the middle of the tenth century, refer most probably to such troops (see esp. pp. 39-40).

90. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber*, p. 316ff; Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription*, pp. 79-80 and notes; Dagron, Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla*, p. 262. Leo VI notes that the thematic administration should arm and equip the less well off but militarily more useful at the expense of the better-off, although the general was encouraged to select the best from among those registered on the thematic *kodix*. See Leo, *Tact.*, iv, 1; xviii, 129f; xx, 205. This process was probably that described already of *syndosis*. In contrast, the whole *strateia* could be commuted, as occurred in the Peloponnese and other western provinces in the reigns of Leo VI and Romanos I on several occasions, as we have seen; cf. *DAI*, 51.192-204; 52.12-15. In the case of the Peloponnese, a sum of 100 lbs gold was required in lieu of service, which was demanded at the rate of 5 *nomismata* per head from all those registered for military service. For Nikephoros' legislation see *Jus Graecoromanum*, edd. I. and P. Zepos, 8 vols., Athens 1931/Aalen 1962, i, coll. iii, nov. xxii, pp. 255-256 (new edn.: N. Svoronos, *Les novelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes*, éd. posthume P. Gounaridis, Athens 1994, p. 176) (cf. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches 565-1453* [Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, Reihe A, Abt. I] i-iv, Munich-Berlin 1924-1965; ii, 2nd edn. ed. P. Wirth, Munich 1977, no. 721). See the brief discussion in N. Oikonomides, «The Social Structure of the Byzantine Countryside in the First Half of the Xth Century», pp. 109-111; and Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, p. 251ff.

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individual Romans and non-Romans attracted to serve for a particular length of time or particular campaign, at specific rates, and equipped by the state, drawn both from the regular registered *stratiôtai* and others: the four imperial *tagmata* may be seen in this light[91] as well as the units occasionally recruited by emperors for special service, such as the special naval troops raised by Michael II, the *Tessarakontarioi,* or the *Athanatoi* established under John Tzimiskes; as well as the numerous other special *tagmata* referred to for the later tenth and eleventh century[92]; and (b) units made up of non-Romans from a particular ethnic group or region – some sections of the *Hetaireia*, for example, the Chazars and Pharganoi serving at court, or the «Ethiopian» unit raised during the reign of Theophilos. These seem normally to have come under Roman command[93].

Last of all, the various foreign units serving under their own leaders for a particular length of time or campaign become a standard element of the military establishment – the *Rus* or Varangians with their boats in the campaigns of 935 to

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91. That some of the soldiers of the imperial *tagmata* seem also to have been subject to the *strateia* and to have been proprietors of land in their own right seems clear: see Haldon, *Praetorians*, pp. 297-298. Service in the imperial *tagmata* was open to regular registered *stratiôtai* of the *themata*, as several examples suggest; cf. the story of the soldier from the Opsikion army who wished to be enrolled as a *scholarios* in the time of Theophilos (Haldon, *Praetorians*, p. 299 and nn. 894-895); or of the mid-ninth-century soldier in the *tagmata* who lived on his rural property, which may have been connected with a family obligation (although he appears to have no-one else to help him, and must ask his friend the village priest to look after his horse while on duty in Constantinople: see *La vita retractata et les miracles posthumes de saint Pierre d'Atroa*, ed. Laurent, 110.1-5, and Haldon, *Praetorians*, p. 325). Contrary to Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, p. 235 (and Idem, «La place des soldats dans la société villageoise byzantine [VIIe-Xe siècles]», *Actes du XVIIIe Congrès de la Société des Historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur Public*, St. Herblain 1991, pp. 45-55, at 46-47), however, I do not think the text can be understood to suggest that he was relatively poor and that he cultivated his land; a period of absence on duty with no-one to maintain his property (as the text makes clear was the case) and, presumably, tend his crops, is difficult to reconcile with any regular agricultural production; while his tagmatic income alone would have raised him above the economic level of the average rural populace.

92. Genesius (*Iosephi Genesii Regum libri quattuor*, edd. I. Lesmüller-Werner, I. Thurn [CFHB 14], Berlin-New York 1978) 35; Th. Cont. (in *Theophanes continuatus, Ioannes Caminiata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus contunuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB, Bonn 1825, pp. 1-481), p. 81.6f; Ps.-Symeon (*Symeonis Magistri ac Logothetae Annales a Leone Armenio ad Nicephorum Phocam*, in: *Theophanes continuatus*, pp. 603-760), pp. 623-24 for the *Tessarakontarioi* (and Bury, *ERE*, p. 143, n. 7); and Leo Diac., 107.11f, 132.17-18 for the *Athanatoi*. See Ahrweiler,« Recherches», p. 27f.

93. See *Acta Martyr. Amor.*, p. 27.9-11 (De XLII martyribus Amoriensibus narrationes et carmina sacra, ed. B. Wassiliewsky, P. Nikitine, in: *Mémoires de l'Acad. impériale de St. Petersburg*, classe phil.-hist., viii sér., 7 [1905] no. 2, pp. 22-36: de Callisto [BHG 1213]) and Haldon, *Praetorians*, p. 518 n. 681; *Klet. Phil. (Klêtorologion tou Philotheou*, in Oikonomidès, *Listes*, pp. 81-235), p. 209.20-21; *Three Treatises*, [C] 378f; *De Cer.*, pp. 576.8; 661.1f. On the *Hetaireia*, see Haldon, *Praetorians*, p. 252 and n. 683.

Italy, and 949 and 965 against Crete, for example[94]. Their numbers increased dramatically during the eleventh century as the provincial soldiery was neglected and the *strateia* fiscalised; although it should be emphasised that the use of mercenaries in large numbers need not in itself be an indicator of «decline», political or economic: as has recently been pointed out, they continued to be employed throughout the twelfth century and well after the stabilisation of finances and political arrangements achieved by Alexios I and his immediate successors[95].

Once in hostile territory, it was assumed that the army would encamp and entrench, and several treatises refer, in one case in considerable detail, to the procedures to be adopted in establishing a suitable position, in laying out and in fortifying the encampment. Details also survive of the order in which the tents of the different units were to be laid out, the distances between them, the system employed for establishing watches and picket lines, passwords and camp security, and so forth[96]. To what extent these theories were put into practice clearly varied according to circumstances, but the evidence of the tenth- and eleventh-century historians suggests that the standard precautions were indeed taken when in enemy territory. The accounts of Leo the Deacon for the campaigns of Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes and the young Basil II, of John Skylitzes and Michael Attaleiates for the same period and for Romanos IV both before and during the Mantzikert campaign, make this very clear[97].

94. *De Cer.*, p. 660.18; 664.15f; Th. Cont., p. 480.

95. See, for example, the soldiers under the mercenary leader Pappas (Bryennios, p. 169.13-14) (*Nicephori Bryennii Historiarum libri quattuor,* ed. P. Gautier [CFHB 9], Brussels 1975), Roussell de Bailleul (Zonaras, III, p. 709.12-13; Bryennios, p. 147.23f, and p. 146 note 8; Anna Comnena, *Alexiad,* I, 2ff [ed. B. Leib, *Anne Comnène, Aléxiade,* 3 vols., Paris 1937-1945]), Crispin (Bryennios, pp. 134 note 2, 148, note 1, 147.23f; Attaleiates, p. 122. 22ff), and Hervé (Scylitzes, p. 467.5-6, 485.53-54). For other units, see Ahrweiler, «Recherches», p. 34. In 1057 Katakalon Kekaumenos marched to support Isaac Komnenos with five *tagmata,* two indigenous units from the *themata* of Chaldia and Koloneia; one unit of Rus, and two of Franks; in addition, units from the *themata* of Melitene, Tephrike and Sebasteia were also present: Scylitzes, pp. 490.15-491.41; Cedrenus, ii, p. 625f. For a recent discussion of the role and effectiveness of such units in the eleventh century, see J. Shepard, «The Uses of the Franks in Eleventh-Century Byzantium», *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1993), pp. 275-305. On the tendency to view mercenaries as a «bad thing», see pp. 275-276.

96. Details of encampments: *Campaign Organisation,* §§1-9; *De vel. bell.,* §15. Cf. *Three Treatises,* [C] 420ff, 540-543, 570-579. See G. Kolias, «Peri apléktou», *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon* 17 (1941), pp. 144-184.

97. Leo Diac., i, 3; 9; ix, 1; x, 8; x, 9 (note that at ix, 1 [p. 143.6-7] Leo notes that the Romans customarily fortify their camps with a ditch and bank surmounted by spears, a technique described exactly in the military treatises (see McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth,* pp. 350, 353-354). He refers frequently to Roman generals throwing up earthworks around besieged cities or fortresses, suggesting that the Roman forces were thoroughly accustomed to such undertakings: cf. iii, 10; iv, 3; iv, 10; iv, 11 for example); Attaleiates, p. 109.5-7 (Romanos IV sets up an entrenched camp «according to the usual fashion»); and pp. 117.11ff; 118.13ff; 119.12f; 120.9-10 for a series of entrenched marching camps set up

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Some of these encampments were obviously substantial, able to ward off major attacks by the enemy at times, while the army needed to be able to set up such an encampment under the most difficult conditions[98]. Anna Comnena feels the need to explain why on one occasion her father did not entrench and fortify his encampment; so that we may assume that the practice was generally followed[99]. By the same token, Byzantine writers note occasions when careless or ignorant commanders failed either to establish a secure camp or, having done so, fail to ensure adequate supplies in the locality or maintain adequate guards and piquets to warn of hostile attack[100]. In Roman territory, in contrast, the army could be housed either in marching camps of this sort, or in the several military base camps, or *aplêkta*, situated at key points along various major military routes[101]. Alternatively, soldiers and officers could also take lodgings with the civilian population, as the evidence from tenth- and eleventh-century documents makes clear (the imposition of *mitaton* and *aplêkton* on local populations), and as at least one ninth-century hagiography, describing how a soldier was billeted in an inn, testifies[102].

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during the campaign and the emperor's withdrawal to Roman territory. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 151.8-10: Romanos sets up an entrenched camp near Mantzikert «in the customary fashion». These and a number of other references in the tenth-and eleventh-century historians' accounts of campaigns at this time, illustrative of the usual practice of establishing a fortified camp, are discussed in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 347-357, with an analysis of the prescriptions of the various contemporary military treatises. For the earlier literature on marching camps, see *ibid.*, p. 347 n. 30.

98. Attaleiates, pp. 111-113; cf. 117.22-118.13, where the Roman forces establish and entrench their camp in good order while under attack; Scylitzes, p. 470.69-70 for the construction of a deep ditch around the Roman camp during a campaign against the Pechenegs; and pp. 470.87-471.7 for the defeated Roman forces besieged inside their encampment. See also Scylitzes, p. 467.11-12, for a camp in which the baggage and supernumeraries were left; and the capture of the camp by the Pechenegs after the Roman defeat, p. 469. 48-50.

99. See *Alexiad*, i. 4. Attaleiates (p. 126.4) similarly mentions an obviously unusual occasion when the emperor Romanos IV did not entrench his camp.

100. Discussed in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 358-359. Cf. Attaleiates, pp. 32.6-33.10 (and cf. Kek., §64 [Wassiliewsky-Jernstedt, p. 22.25ff; ed. G. Litavrin, *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena*, Moscow 1972], §27) for the inexperienced commander appointed by Constantine IX to lead an expedition against the Pechenegs in 1049, who failed to encamp or rest his troops, with disastrous results.

101. See *Three Treatises*, text [A] and notes for a list of the most used *aplêkta*; and [C] *loc. cit.*

102. On these two *aggareiai* or *epêreiai*, state impositions, see the brief refs. in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1, 131; 2, 1385 and the fuller discussion with sources in Haldon, *Praetorians*, pp. 599-601, 993; and Hendy, *Studies*, pp. 610-611. For the hagiography (a story relating to events before Nikephoros I's defeat at the hands of the Bulgar Khan Krum in 811), see *Relatio Nicolai ex milite monachi*, in: *Synax. CP*, 341-344 (*BHG* 2311; cf. *BHG auct.*, App. IV, 1317h), 341.22f; and cf. *Vita Nicolai Stud.* (*PG* 105, 863-925 [*BHG* 1365]), 893f. See L. Clugnet, «Histoire de S. Nicolas, soldat et moine», *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 7 (1902), pp. 319-330 (repr. in *Bibl. Hag. Or.*, 3 , Paris 1902, pp. 27-38).

The order of march varied according to the size of the army and the nature of the terrain, of course, as well as whether or not the emperor was present. Instructions for camps and the order of march are much more carefullly set out in the latter case. When the imperial *tagmata* were present they were given specific positions in camp and on the march[103]; when they were not present, commanders were recommended to pay attention to the relative disposition of mounted and infantry units. Again, the order of march for large forces was very different from that for smaller detachments or raiding parties, clearly set out for the latter in the treatise on skirmishing warfare[104]. All the treatises agree that only the minimum of baggage should accompany the force into hostile regions; the greater part was to be left in home territory, and the *prôtonotarios* of the theme from which the army enters the lands of the enemy should take charge of it[105].

In the document dealing with imperial military campaigns, most of the information from which probably dates from the time of Basil I, the army consists entirely of thematic units and the imperial *tagmata*. By the time of the Cretan expeditions, and partly reflecting social changes in the rural population of the empire, it is clearly quite normal to raise extra units on a mercenary and short-term basis to make up the deficit in numbers and in professional esprit in the thematic militia forces – an imperial officer was despatched to the district of the so-called Plataniatai, in the *Anatolikon* region, for example, to raise 500 selected soldiers, to be equipped from their salaries or from requisitions in the *thema*[106]. Unlike the provision of foodstuffs, which could be taken as part of, or as advance on, the regular land-tax, such requisitions do not appear to have been compensated, and were especially burdensome. From the later tenth century and at an increasing rate through the first half of the eleventh century, the balance between thematic militias on the one hand and their core professional units and other «*tagmata*» shifted decisively in favour of the latter, which in turn had important consequences, not just for the ways in which armies were supplied and maintained, and for the relationship between military units and the provincial population; but also for the whole fiscal administration of the state.

The basic structure which had evolved from the late Roman system described in the fifth and sixth-century evidence, continued to develop and to respond to the

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103. *Three Treaises* [B] 107-115, 134ff; [C] 474 ff; *Campaign Organisation*, §10.
104. See the commentaries of Dagron, *Le traité sur la guérilla*, p. 215ff and McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 332-338; and cf. *Campaign Organisation*, §§10, 12-15 and *Three Treatises, loc. cit.*
105. *Three Treatises*, [B] 128-133; [C] 561ff; *De vel. bell.*, §16.1-13; *Campaign Organisation*, §§15, 17. See now the discussion of McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 330-347.
106. *De Cer.*, p. 657.21ff.

demands and pressures placed upon it during the period of imperial expansion and reconquest after the middle of the tenth century. Two points can be emphasised at the outset. First, the considerable increase in the number of mercenary units maintained on a full-time basis, both indigenous and foreign, seems also to have increased the economic pressures on the rural population who had to support them. Second, one of the results of this was an increase in the number of requests for exemption from the extra burdens which accompanied the presence of such troops in the provinces, with the consequence that the evidence from documents throwing some light on the actual mechanisms of extracting supplies and support for the soldiers becomes a little clearer[107].

## IV

There is no evidence to suggest that the pattern of administration of expeditionary forces changed very markedly between the later tenth and later eleventh centuries. We can assume that preparations were made as before, informing thematic officials of the necessary requirements, which had to be prepared in advance ready for the army to collect, and that supplies provided were set against the annual tax demand for the region in question. On the other hand, the majority of the soldiers were no longer stood down for much of the year and called up only for such expeditions, or when an attack threatened, a system which had the obvious advantage, from the point of view of the management and distribution of resources, that soldiers thus supported themselves and constituted no extra burden on the tax-payers. Under the changes which have been referred to, the presence of soldiers all year round must more often have been the case, and such soldiers would need to be fed, housed, their animals catered for, and so on, throughout the year.

The lists of impositions in imperial grants of exemption give some idea of what sort of demands were made. These burdens were, in themselves, not new: the imposition of billeting and feeding soldiers and officers, grinding corn and baking bread, and providing extra supplies for units passing through or based in a district,

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107. For discussion and sources, see N. Oikonomidès, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin», *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), pp. 125-152, esp. 144. For the general increase in the rate of demand and issue of exemptions at this period, see G. Ostrogorsky, «Pour l'histoire de l'immunité à Byzance», *Byzantion* 28 (1958), pp. 165-254; for the nature of the demands, see A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900-1200*, Cambridge 1989, p. 105ff. Even if, as is certainly probable, the greater prominence of exemptions among the extant documentary sources reflects also the greater prominence and growth of the landed wealthy in the empire during the tenth century and after, this would naturally bring with it a disadvantageous redistribution of state burdens onto those not able to obtain such exemptions. Now see also N. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Athens 1996.

providing craftsmen and artisans for public and military works, burning charcoal, providing labour for the maintenance or construction of roads and bridges, had existed from Roman times and are still found, sometimes under slightly different names, in the eleventh century[108]. But in addition, from the middle of the seventh century and certainly by the tenth and eleventh centuries a group of new impositions had evolved, including the provision or fabrication of weapons and items of military equipment, a reflection of the break-down of the late Roman system of *fabricae* or state arms factories. After the period of the initial Arab conquests in the 630s and 640s, most of the late Roman workshops were outside the imperial frontier; of those that remained within the state –at Sardis, Nicomedia, Adrianople, Caesarea, Thessaloniki– virtually nothing is known. But some evidence of continuity is provided by the reference to *exkoussatoi* of an imperial *armamenton* at Caesarea in the tenth century, noted already, which may suggest that other establishments did survive[109]. Arms workshops continued to exist in Constantinople; but whether the official in charge of these –the *archôn tou armamentou*– was in charge of the provincial establishments as well as these is unclear[110].

The provision of raw materials for weapons had been achieved in the late Roman period through the regular taxation (iron ore, for example, formed part of the tax-burden –*synteleia*– of those who extracted ore in the Taurus mountain region)[111] together with compulsory levies in wood and other materials. The tenth- and eleventh-century evidence suggests that a similar combination of levies (wood, charcoal etc.) and purchases (or compulsory purchases) was operated. The production of different types of weapon was commissioned and passed on to provincial craftsmen and manufacturers of items such as spears, arrows, bows, shields and so forth[112]. For other materials, cash could be issued from the *eidikon* with which to purchase iron or similar requirements from provincial sources for the production of specialised items, for example, for naval construction[113]. During the

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108. See *CTh.*, xi, xvi, 15.18 (laws of 382 and 390); and cf. F. Dölger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung besonders des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts* (Byzantinisches Archiv 9), Munich 1927/Hildesheim 1960, pp. 60-62; Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 105-109 for the tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantine equivalents.

109. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, p. 318ff and Cantarella, «Basilio Minimo II», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 26 (1926), pp. 3-34.

110. See *T. Usp.*, 57.26; 61.14 (Oikonomidès, *Listes*, pp. 47-63); *Klet. Phil*, p. 155.2; *De Cer.*, p. 673.20ff; further sources and literature in Haldon, *Praetorians*, pp. 319-321 with nn. 972-977.

111. *CTh.*, xi, 7.7 (a. 424); Basil, *Ep.* (in *PG* 32, 219-1112), no. 110.

112. See note 25 and refs. above.

113. Thus for 949 the *prôtospatharios* and *archôn* of the *armamenton*, Joacheim, was issued with 6 lbs 34 *nomismata* and 3 *miliaresia* in cash for purchasing materials for the imperial fleet: *De Cer.*, pp.

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eleventh century, a number of landlords, both lay and monastic, succeeded in obtaining exemptions for their estates from the levy of weapons and other supplies. Furthermore, since units of mercenary or tagmatic soldiers were often based permanently in a particular location through the winter season –*eis paracheimasian* as it is called in the sources– such demands may have occurred both more frequently and on a more arbitrary basis, according to the needs of individual units and their commanders, than hitherto[114].

The earliest extant grants of exemption make no specific mention of military exactions: that issued by Basil I in 883 simply forbids anyone to «vex» the monks of Athos and the monastery of John Kolobos at Hierissos, although this may have included demands from the military[115]. Leo VI issued a judgement in 908 similarly freeing the monks from any «vexation» (or imposition) and «harm»; and in 934 Romanos I frees a monastic house near Athos from impositions, corvées and exactions from civil or episcopal authorities[116]. More explicitly in a document of 945/946 (not extant), confirmed in a *sigillion* of 975[117], and in documents of 957/958, 959/960, 974 and 995, freedom from military impositions is granted, including *kastroktisia, mêtaton* and *chorton* (supplying fodder)[118]. In the case of the document of 995, it is worth noting that it was issued by the military commander of the troops in the region in the context of the series of Bulgar raids and the presence of large numbers of Byzantine troops from the Armeniak and Boukellarion *themata*, and gives a good idea of the effects on the local economy of the presence of large bodies of soldiers[119], effects reported in the later account of the wars of the

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673.20-674.7. For the naval arsenal in Constantinople, see N. Oikonomides, «*To katô armaménton*», *Archeion Pontou* (1964), pp. 193-196; and cf. Ahrweiler, *Mer*, p. 424, n. 4.

114. See *Scylitzes*, p. 485.53-54 (Frankish troops in winter stations in the Armeniakon district); Cedrenus, ii, p. 508.19-20 (Varangians in the *thema Thrakêsiôn*); *ibid.*, p. 608.18-19 (Franks and Varangians in winter quarters in Iberia and Chaldia). Cf. Attaleiates, p. 122.7-11, where Romanos IV returns from his Syrian campaign in mid-winter and disperses his mercenary forces and the «western *tagmata*» in winter quarters in the Anatolikon region.

115. See *Actes du Prôtaton*, ed. D. Papachryssanthou (Archives de l'Athos VII), Paris 1975, 1 (p. 180).

116. *Actes du Prôtaton*, 2 (pp. 184-185) and 3 (p. 187).

117. See *Actes d'Iviron*, I: *des origines au milieu du XIe siècle*, edd. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou (Archives de l'Athos XIV), Paris 1985, 2 (pp. 112-113) (the burdens of *aplêkton* and *mêtaton* are specifically mentioned). Reference to the contents of the original document: *Actes d'Iviron*, II, no. 32.

118. 957/958 and 959/960: see *Actes d'Iviron*, II, no. 32 (for 1059); 974: *Actes de Lavra*, I: des *origines à 1204*, edd. P. Lemerle, N. Svoronos, A. Guillou, D. Papachryssanthou (Archives de l'Athos V), Paris 1970, 6 (p. 110); 995 (confirming the act of 959/960): *Actes d'Iviron*, I, 8 (pp. 153-154).

119. See the commentary of the editors, *Actes d'Iviron*, I, p. 153.

second half of the tenth century penned by the historian Skylitzes[120]. In the
eleventh century Michael Psellos writes a letter about the weight of the burden of
state exactions in the form of demands for livestock, probably horses, which were
needed when the army was present; and the anonymous author of the *Logos
nouthetêtikos* is aware of the burden imposed upon the tax-payers when the
imperial cortège and troops pass through a region[121].

In the period before the changes of the later tenth century, it is likely that the
overall burden on the rural population of the provinces was fairly evenly
distributed, and that, although the transit of imperial forces did involve unusually
heavy demands on the communities closest to the routes used by military
detachments, such demands were neither frequent nor regular, the more so since the
emperors seem to have maximised their use of the system of base-camps or *aplêkta*
as points for the concentration of smaller forces from a wide area. Thus very large
armies marching across imperial territory will have been comparatively unusual –
and hence also the much more devastating consequences when civil strife broke out
(as in the war between Michael II and Thomas the Slav, for example).

The presence of many more full-time units, whether indigenous or foreign,
needing supplies, fodder, housing and other necessities throughout the winter and
possibly all year round, and who could not draw upon their families and their own
resources, must have considerably increased the overall burden on the rural
populations which provided these provisions. The result was, in effect, the
extension of the traditional system for maintaining armies on campaign, which had
been in operation from late Roman times, and which had affected most provinces
only occasionally[122], into the standard or regular means of maintaining imperial
forces. In contrast to the general situation in the ninth and earlier years of the tenth
century[123], the bulk of the provincial soldiery could no longer be said to support
itself over the greater part of the year. Furthermore, unlike the older thematic
«militia», these soldiers will generally have had no common interest with the

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120. Scylitzes, p. 274.46-51, referring to the hardships caused by the presence of troops during the
reign of Nikephoros II and the demands made on the rural population for extra provisions and taxes.

121. Psellos' letter describes the plight of a widow subject to the *epidosis monoprosôpôn*: see K.
Sathas, *Mesaiônikê Bibliothêkê*, 7 vols., Venice 1872-1894, v, p. 363. For the *Logos nouthetêtikos*, see
*Cecaumeni Strategicon*, edd. Wassiliewsky-Jernstedt, 103.33-104.2.

122. In the later Roman period, for example, regions such as Thrace illustrate the effects of the
constant presence of imperial troops, regions which could no longer afford to supply the troops through
the usual system of taking what was needed from the annual tax return in kind or cash and balancing the
accounts from the following year; but where instead a system of permanent *coemptio* or compulsory
purchase had to be enforced. See *CJ.*, 27.2/10.

123. See the letters of Nikolaos I referred to above, for example. The military situation and Bulgar
wars clearly promoted exceptional circumstances.

provincials who supported them. Monastic charters and exemptions are particularly instructive for, as Oikonomides has shown, the number of groups of foreign mercenaries alone who were dependent upon rights of billeting and provisioning at the expense of local communities and landlords increases very sharply from the 1040s[124]. But this process seems already to have got under way from about 950, so that from that time and with increasing rapidity during the first half of the eleventh century, the most costly units and a greater proportion numerically of the armies had to be maintained at the direct expense of a rural or sometimes urban population. Of course, there must have been considerable regional variations, evidence for which is lacking, so that some districts, especially those from which the imperial forces conducted operations over several seasons, will have been more drastically affected. The amount of state resources extracted by these means was probably considerable, a development illustrated by the fact that the value of the *antikaniskion* (the monetised equivalent of the *kaniskion*, a render of produce to imperial officials in the course of carrying out their duties) and related demands made on some properties of the monastery of Vatopedi in the later eleventh century was actually greater than the rate of land-tax imposed[125].

At the same time, of course, the fiscalised *strateia* was still collected by state officials as a further source of revenue for the maintenance of the armies[126]; so that it is not correct to suggest that the registers of thematic *stratiôtai* were entirely neglected – it was from these that the regular *tagmata* of the themes were recruited, and upon the basis of which the fiscalised *strateia* was also extracted. By the time of the Mantzikert campaign, however, and as a result of imperial neglect and reductions in military salaries[127], the regular or Roman tagmatic forces recruited from each *thema* were reduced in number and poorly equipped: emperors had not

124. Although this increase may have set in some time before this date, when the first document to list such units which has survived was issued. See Oikonomidès, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin», p. 144 and *Fiscalité*, pp. 264-272.

125. See M. Goudas, «Byzantiaka eggrapha tês en Athô hieras monês tou Batopediou», *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon* 3 (1926), pp. 113-134, at 125-126 and discussion in G. Ostrogorsky, «Pour l'histoire de l'immunité à Byzance», *Byzantion* 28 (1958), pp. 165-254, at 190f. The *kaniskion* and its monetary equivalents were carefully controlled: see Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire*, p. 105f.

126. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire*, p.110f; Haldon, «Military Service, Military Lands and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations», pp. 38-40. It is important to note, however, that the fiscalised *strateia* was extracted only from those households which were entered as military households –*stratiôtikoi oikoi*– on the thematic registers: see an early eleventh-century document from Byzantine southern Italy, ed. F. Nitti, *Le pergamene di S. Nicolò di Bari. Periodo greco (939-1071)*, Bari 1902/repr. Bari 1964, pp. 26-28 no. 13, where *strateia* clearly refers to a fiscalised imposition, but retains a definite hereditary connection with a particular family and its land.

127. Attaleiates, pp. 77. 4-7, 11-13; 78.10-12; 78.22-79.6.

taken to the field themselves for many years, and the revenues from the *strateiai* had been employed for other than military expenditures[128]. In some frontier regions where the state had traditionally preferred regular military service for those registered, for example, Constantine IX, as is well known, disbanded many units and extracted the tax equivalent[129]. And in spite of the fact that landlords with access to imperial patronage, both secular and monastic, attempted to free themselves from such extra impositions through obtaining grants of exemption of one sort or another, it is clear that in many cases the needs and demands of the local military meant that privileges were often ignored entirely[130]. Although the amount of resources lost to the state through grants of exemption remains a point for discussion, the fact that Isaac I was diligent in cancelling such concessions suggests that it cannot have been negligible, for he was himself, as a member of the military elite, particularly aware of the needs of the army in the provinces[131]. It has been suggested that the state lost very little through such concessions; that exemptions went primarily to those few bodies or individuals who enjoyed imperial favour; and that the few secular landlords who benefited in this way were exceptionally privileged[132]. The lack of clear documentary evidence makes a convincing and definite conclusion impossible, of course. Yet this argument ignores the explicit

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128. Attaleiates, pp. 103.4-104.3; Cedrenus, ii, p. 668; Zonaras, iii, p. 698. Note that Kekaumenos (§59) warns against permitting this state of affairs to develop. It is not entirely clear to which categories of troops these authors are referring: while they may be describing all those registered in the thematic registers as subject to the *strateia*, this would include also the regular, nominally full-time thematic *tagmata* supported by the other *strateia*-holders in each theme, and this would better relate to the description in Attaleiates of these run-down, under-equipped forces as the formerly renowned regiments of the Roman army. For a brief summary of the effects of these policies see Sp. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1971, p. 85ff.

129. Although the system of recruiting and maintaining soldiers in many of these regions, which had only relatively recently been incorporated into the empire, must have been rather different. See Kekaumenos, §50; Scylitzes, p. 476.51-53; note that Attaleiates, p. 44.19ff states that the emperor cancelled the provisions and support the soldiers received from the districts in which they were based; while Kekaumenos says that the imperial official Serblias was sent to carry out a census and to impose taxes «which the people in those regions had never before seen». Together, the two statements suggest that military service had hitherto been based upon customary obligations supported from local revenues, both aspects of which were henceforth fiscalised.

130. Cf. the letters of Theophylact of Ochrid for the rapacity of imperial officials and the inability of the state to supervise them effectively: P. Gautier, ed., *Théophylacte d'Achrida*, Lettres, Thessaloniki 1986, nos. 12, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 31, 55, 61, 85, 96, 98; and A. Harvey, «The Land and Taxation in the Reign of Alexios I Komnenos: the Evidence of Theophylact of Ochrid», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 51 (1993), p. 146.

131. See Attaleiates, pp. 60-62.

132. R. Morris, «Monastic exemptions in tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantium», *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. W. Davies, P. Fouracre, Cambridge 1995, pp. 200-220.

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testimony of Attaleiates in this matter, for he is quite clear that «*many* private persons» (my emphases) who held privileges confirmed in chrysobulls had their privileges ignored or withdrawn, to the benefit of the fisc, and this surely implies more than a mere handful of close associates of the emperors. He goes on to remark on the recovery by the state of substantial revenues ceded to monastic houses or communities, and that this had beneficial results in two ways: first, it relieved the monks of worldly cares; second, it freed the rural communities from the burdens which they owed to these landlords[133]. In addition, it is unlikely that high-ranking imperial officials such as Attaleiates and Pakourianos were entirely untypical – the military-political elite may well have been numerically small, but it controlled a disproportionate amount of landed property[134].

The basic requirement for the organisation of military expeditions and campaigns in the eleventh century remained the same as in the preceding centuries. What changed were the conditions under which those requirements had to be met. Although evidence is limited, some information for the process of supplying and maintaining forces in the field is to be found in the details of some eleventh-century campaigns, including the campaigns of Romanos IV in 1068 and that which led up to the battle of Mantzikert in 1071, and in the preparations made by Alexios I to deal with the passage through imperial territory in the Balkans of the Crusader armies.

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133. Atttaleiates, pp. 61.6-8; 61.17-62.4. Oikonomidès has attempted to compute the relative proportions of free peasants and *paroikoi* in the Peloponnese and in the Thrakesion region in the tenth century, and concluded that *paroikoi* probably outnumbered the former. If the results of these calculations are accepted, it would suggest that, contrary to Morris's arguments, the number of landlords *potentially* in a position to obtain exemptions of some sort was very considerable: see Oikonomidès, «The Social Structure of the Byzantine Countryside», pp. 120-124.

134. See J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*, Paris 1990, pp. 207-237. A further point needs to be borne in mind, for the question of where such property or holdings were located is crucial. Exemptions were most likely to be asked for in just those regions where the burden of state impositions was felt to be most onerous, whoever the landlord. Whether they were always granted cannot be known. But freeing a property in a region in which soldiers were based would inevitably have repercussions for the rest of the producing population, since the reduction of resources from one group of taxpayers would mean an increase for others. The example of the Athonite communities, close to the Bulgarian borders, always within a «frontier» region or its hinterland, as were the properties of the monastery of St. John the Theologian on Patmos, are cases in point. Athonite communities may indeed be exceptional in their privileges; but this may reflect their relatively exposed position as much as their imperial patronage. For Attaleiates and Pakourianos, see P. Gautier, «Le typikon du sébaste Grégoire Pakourianos», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 42 (1984), pp. 5-145; and Idem, «Le diataxis de Michel Attaliate», *Revue des Études Byzantines* 39 (1981), pp. 5-143. And it is contemporary historians and chroniclers, such as Attaleiates and Psellos, for example, both of whom had some knowledge of state affairs, as well as those of later writers such as Zonaras, who suggest that the total resources alienated through grants of immunity, however limited individual grants may have been, was considerable (iii, pp. 667-668).

In the campaign against the Turks conducted by Romanos IV after his accession, the regular entrenched camps[135], the accompanying supply-train and the supplies carried with the army are all referred to[136]. Such supplies were raised by the various fiscal and military officials mentioned in the exemptions granted to monastic landlords. In Byzantine territory, and presumably when the army arrived in a district which was not warned in advance, troops were sent out to purchase corn and other requirements from the local populations[137]. As we have seen, even if this did not directly damage the local economy, it seems always to have had a distorting effect on prices and exchange relationships. In hostile territory, the army foraged for its own supplies[138], although commanders had to make sure that they took the army into districts where supplies could be found[139]. The military treatises of the tenth century and the historians' accounts of many of the campaigns of this period show that foraging for supplies was one of the most risk-laden activities which the commander had to organise – failure to guard against surprise attack, on the one hand, and the failure of the foragers to locate and secure adequate provisions could prove disastrous[140].

As regards recruitment of soldiers, Romanos IV seems to have been able to raise a substantial army for his first campaign by mustering the reduced and straitened thematic *tagmata* (and presumably also the eastern detachments of the *tagmata* proper) and recruiting a new draft of young men (presumably on the basis of the military registers). But as several contemporary sources note, the soldiers raised from the provinces on the basis of their stratiotic obligations were quite unfitted for warfare, not having been mustered for many years, their service being commuted for a cash sum; nor having been paid or supplied with their traditional provisions; the older men, who had some experience of fighting, were without mounts and equipment; the newer draftees had no experience at all and were quite without training[141], the emperor having to mix them with the more experienced soldiers[142]. The majority of the army was nevertheless collected from indigenous

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135. E. g. Attaleiates, pp. 109.5-7, with 111-113 (hostile attacks on the encampment); 117.11ff; 119.12; 133.19-20; 135.14-18; 151.8ff; 184.5-6, etc.

136. See Attaleiates, pp. 117.1; 126.5; 134.13-14; 140.7-8; etc.

137. E. g. Attaleiates, pp. 107.23-108.1 (a detachment sent off to purchase corn); 126.14-15 (the rearguard lags behind the main body of the army in order to protect those sent to purchase supplies).

138. Cf. Attaleiates, p. 116.18-19; and see p. 146.18-22, where Roman and mercenary forces cause much damage to the locality of Krya Pēgē in their search for supplies and fodder.

139. E. g. Attaleiates, p. 136.5-8; the army of Romanos IV cannot march to Melitene since its hinterland offers no support.

140. See the examples discussed by McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp. 357-358, in particular the disastrous campaign of Romanos III to Syria in 1030.

141. Attaleiates, pp. 78.23-79.6; 93.5-11; Cedrenus ii, pp. 668-669.

142. Attaleiates, p. 104.13-20.

forces, a mixture of regular mercenary units from the different parts of the empire and the older thematic soldiers registered in the provincial *kôdikes*. The *tagmata* of the West, perhaps because they had been less neglected than their eastern counterparts, were regarded much more highly: the «five *tagmata* of the West» were classed by Attaleiates alongside the western mercenaries in respect of their military value[143]. No mention is made of their eastern detachments; but the poor state of the eastern forces stems in part also from the effects of the civil wars of 1047-1048 and 1057[144]. For the Mantzikert campaign, Romanos could raise as many as some 60,000 men in all, according to a recent estimate[145], although Attaleiates notes that many of these deserted or were left behind as too unreliable at the beginning of the campaign[146]. He seems also to have been able to rely on the traditional means of raising and distributing supplies for his troops while they were en route to confront the Seljuk forces, although the arrangements did not always work especially well: Attaleiates notes that the troops, and the foreign mercenary forces in particular, caused considerable damage to the region arround Krya Pêgê[147]. His supply train was considerable, as the presence of a large number of wagons with siege equipment appears to testify, suggesting that the central armouries, the local provincial officials and the commanders of the army were able effectively to co-operate on the traditional pattern for the provisioning and equipping of the imperial troops[148]. Once in territory which had been in hostile hands, however, he was forced to forage for provisions: the Franks under Roussel de Bailleul based near Chliat were ordered to seize the harvested crops; the troops from Theodosioupolis were ordered to

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143. Attaleiates, pp. 122.7ff; 123.8-10. Cf. p. 104.16-18 (new officers and soldiers brigaded with experienced western units). The five western *tagmata* may be identified with the detachments of the *Scholai, Exkoubitoi, Vigla, Hikanatoi* and the *Athanatoi,* based in Macedonia, Thrace and Hellas. See Oikonomidès, *Listes,* pp. 329-333; Ahrweiler, «Recherches», p. 26ff. Their eastern detachments seem to have suffered during the civil war culminating in Isaac I's victory at Nicaea in 1057, although there are occasional mentions of the *Scholai* and *Exkoubitoi* up to 1071 and 1082 respectively: see Cedrenus, ii, p. 602 (the *Scholai* and their *topotêrêtês* at Adrianople in 1050); Attaleiates, p. 112.12; Cedrenus, ii, p. 675 (the *syntagma* of the *Scholai* with Romanos IV in 1068/69); Anna Comnena, *Alexiad,* iv, 4 (the *Exkoubitoi* at Dyrrhachion with Alexios in 1081/82). On the other hand, Attaleiates refers to the *Scholai* alongside a more recently-formed unit, the *Stratêlatai* (Attaleiates, p. 112, 8-10; cf. Cedrenus, ii, p. 417; 673). The term may similarly have included other units created in the late tenth and first half of the eleventh century, such as the *Megathymoi.* Cf. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee,* p. 247ff.

144. See Attaleiates, p. 29.2ff; Cedrenus, ii, p. 562; 625ff.

145. J.-C. Cheynet, «Mantzikert: un désastre militaire?», *Byzantion* 50 (1980) pp. 410-438, see 425f.; and Idem, «Les effectifs de l'armée byzantine aux Xe-XIIe s.», *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 38/4 (1995), pp. 319-335, at 332.

146. Attaleiates, pp. 145.21-146.4.

147. See n. 135 above.

148. Attaleiates, p. 151.13ff.

provide two months' supplies for themselves[149]; and Matthew of Edessa notes that some 12,000 troops were sent towards Abkhazia to find supplies[150].

The later tenth- and eleventh-century sources, especially the documents granting exemptions, suggest that a wide range of state impositions on the rural population was maintained to ensure the adequate arming, equipping and provisioning of troops. They likewise list many of the officials responsible for these arrangements in the provinces. The *synônarioi, strateutai, chartoularioi* of the *themata*, and many others such as *epoptai*, are referred to, officials responsible for raising the supplies needed for the army, for registering or raising the soldiers in each province, and related issues[151]. Their existence illustrates the, continued effectiveness of the central authorities in extracting resources for its troops. Some of the letters of Theophylact of Ochrid, referred to already, mention these officials and their exactions[152]. It was these officials who will have been responsible for the arrangements made by Alexios in the 1090s for the passage and provisioning of the Crusader forces, arrangements whose success demonstrates the continued efficiency of the imperial military and provincial administration in catering for its armies at this time[153].

A number of changes in the administrative arrangements for central supervision of the supplying of the armies did, however, take place between the middle of the tenth and the later eleventh century, although they do not appear to have affected the practicalities of extracting resources in terms of provisions, livestock and hospitality. One of the most significant is the expansion of the authority of the thematic *kritai*, and the corresponding reduction of the importance of the *prôtonotarioi*[154], a process which reflects the efforts made by the central government from the later tenth and into the eleventh century to extend the definition of the fisc, and consequently the judicial authority of the fiscal

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149. Attaleiates, p. 150.7-9; 148.14-17.

150. Mathieu d'Edesse, *Chronique*, ed. Dulaurier, Paris 1879, p. 168.

151. See e. g., Zonaras, iii, p. 505 (for the various officials responsible for carrying through the military registration programme under Nikephoros II). For discussion, see Dölger, *Beiträge*, pp. 21, 60-62; N. Oikonomidès, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin», p. 144 and *Fiscalité et exeption fiscale*, pp. 273-283; and Harvey, *Economic Expansion*, p. 105ff.

152. References in n. 128 above.

153. Cf., for example, Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, x.5.

154. See in particular Oikonomidès, *Listes*, p. 344ff, 354-363; Idem, «L'évolution de l'organisation administrative de l'empire byzantin», pp. 135-141, 148ff; Ahrweiler, «Recherches», pp. 46-67, 82-88; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 336, 387f; N. Svoronos, «Société et organisation intérieure dans l'empire byzantin au XIe siècle: les principaux problèmes», *Études sur l'organisation intérieure, la société et l'économie de l'empire byzantin*, London, Variorum Reprints, 1973, IX, pp. 1-17.

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departments, in order to retain control over its taxable resources. It must also reflect the relatively rapid decline in importance of the traditional thematic forces during this period, and in particular the *stratêgoi* of the older *themata* and the militarised administration with which they were so closely associated[155].

The enormous demands made upon the ordinary population of the empire when a military expedition was undertaken required an administrative structure which could deal with all facets of the armies' needs, whether in terms of raising and equipping new recruits or in respect of supplying the vast number of men, horses, mules and other animals which an army on the march needed. Some of the difficulties faced by expeditionary forces become clear when we examine some of the campaigns launched against its enemies by the empire in the period from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. What is evident, and important to recognise, is that the basic structures which had evolved by the late Roman period retained their relevance in the early and middle Byzantine period; but it is also apparent that those structures continued to evolve and to develop in response to the changed context, different fiscal organisational needs and changed political emphases of the period after the sixth century. By the middle and later eleventh century, the structures of internal political power, together with a very different international context, had evolved sufficiently for substantial changes in fiscal and military administration to take place or, to express things somewhat differently, to become inevitable. These changes become apparent in the years following 1071, but especially during the early reign of Alexios I.

155. See esp. P. Magdalino, «Justice and Finance in the Byzantine State, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries», Angeliki E. Laiou, Dieter Simon, eds., *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, Washington D. C. 1994, pp. 93-115.

# Part VI
# Fortifications and Siege Warfare

# [21]

## Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages

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### I. Introduction

One of the unsolved questions pertaining to medieval artillery is whether or not the torsion machines of classical antiquity continued to be used in the Middle Ages. This question has generated a good deal of discussion but remains unresolved. When this question was first addressed in the mid-nineteenth century, the answer was a resounding "No!" In his pioneering work on artillery published in 1840, Guillaume Dufour, while contending that medieval engineers were aware of the force of torsion, stated that, "it must have been difficult to procure the sinews in sufficient quantity and to fabricate the enormous cables which were needed to launch the weights, making these torsion machines increasingly rare, and making the counterweight machines for throwing stones and machines with tension bows for throwing bolts preferable."[1] He concluded that "the catapult or *onager* appears to have been replaced nearly everywhere by the trebuchet."[2] Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) echoed this view in his magisterial work on artillery, declaring that, "the artillery pieces used in the Middle Ages, in defending as well as in attacking [fortified] places, were not those of the Romans [i.e., torsion artillery]. . . . The machines of the Middle Ages were trebuchets or else base-mounted tension catapults [*arbalètes à tours*]."[3] At the end of the nineteenth century the question was answered in the affirmative by the experienced artilleryman and military historian General Köhler, who maintained that torsion artillery continued in use from Roman

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[1] Guillaume Dufour, *Mémoire sur l'artillerie des anciens et sur celle du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Ab. Cherbuliez et Cᵉ, 1840), p. 97.

[2] Dufour, p. 99.

[3] Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, *Études sur le passé et l'avenir de l'artillerie*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Militaire de J. Dumaine, 1851), p. 26. In his discussion of medieval artillery, Louis Napoléon uses the term *arbalète à tour* to refer to a large base-mounted tension catapult (p. 27), but he also uses this term to refer to the windlass crossbow (Vol. 1 [1848], pl. 1). Louis-Napoléon argues for a complete break between the artillery of classical antiquity and that of the Middle Ages. For a full discussion of Louis-Napoléon's position on this question, see pp. 38–53.

times through the Middle Ages.[4] In 1910 Rudolf Schneider challenged Köhler's view and argued that discontinuity, rather than continuity, characterized the development of artillery from ancient through medieval times. His findings suggested that the artillery of classical antiquity did not survive the collapse of Rome, and a long period ensued – from the fifth to the ninth century – during which artillery was not used in the Latin West.[5] When artillery was again employed in western Europe, it was radically different from its classical form. The possibility of the continuation of torsion artillery was ruled out by Schneider, because he believed that torsion catapults had fallen out of use long before the appearance of medieval artillery, and this artillery operated on entirely different principles from the torsion machines of antiquity. The Finnish orientalist Kalervo Huuri rendered his judgment on the continuation of torsion artillery in 1941 and concluded that such artillery may have been used in the medieval Mediterranean world, in the form of the one-armed torsion machine of late antiquity, the *onager*. He found no evidence, however, for the survival of the two-armed torsion catapult.[6]

Others have entered the debate on the question of the continuity of torsion artillery, but the works of the above-mentioned scholars remain the fundamental studies on the topic and form the basis for any debate of this issue. Recently, Randall Rogers has reviewed this debate in his excellent monograph *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century*.[7] He rightly points out that the "lack of certainty regarding the forms of artillery employed in the early and central Middle Ages reflects fundamental problems with the available evidence."[8] The available evidence consists of narrative accounts, most of which do not provide sufficient detail to identify the type of artillery mentioned, illustrations contemporary to the Middle Ages or the Renaissance which depict artillery, and technical treatises on medieval artillery. Despite the Herculean efforts of Louis-Napoléon, Köhler, Schneider, and Huuri to master this evidence, they fell short of their goal. They missed or improperly understood key texts which clarify the nomenclature of medieval artillery; they gave only limited attention to the vast array of illustrated material on medieval artillery and failed to adequately analyze this evidence; and they did not consult the most significant technical treatises on medieval artillery, written in Arabic. The most important of these treatises have now been published, but major editorial errors and incorrect interpretation of the technical

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4  G. Köhler, *Die Entwickelung des Kriegwesens und der Kriegführung in der Ritterzeit von Mitte des II. Jahrhunderts bis zu den Hussitenkriegen*, Vol. 3 (Breslau: Verlag von Wilhelm Koebner, 1890), pp. 139–211.

5  Rudolf Schneider, *Die Artillerie des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1910), pp. 10–16.

6  Kalervro Huuri, "Zur Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Geschützwesens aus orientalischen Quellen," in *Societas Orientalia Fennica, Studia Orientalia* 9.3 (1941), 51–63, 212–14.

7  Randall Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 254–73.

8  Rogers, p. 254.

terminology obscure a proper understanding of them.[9] The conflict between the "continuist" and 'discontinuist" schools of thought on medieval artillery may rage indefinitely – with neither side able to claim a decisive victory – unless the full weight of the evidence is brought to bear on this question.

The question pertaining to the continuity of torsion artillery can be approached from many angles. This study will investigate the evidence indicating the continuation or demise of the two-armed torsion catapult in historical and military writings from late antiquity.[10] None of the above-mentioned scholars offered conclusive proof for the disuse of this type of artillery in late antiquity. Moreover, the last systematic examination of the relevant Latin and Greek texts pertaining to this question, completed by E. W. Marsden, concluded that torsion artillery – both single- and double-spring varieties – continued to be produced in late antiquity and that this artillery was comparable in quality to earlier Greek and Roman ordnance.[11] These texts – written by Flavius Vegetius Renatus,[12]

[9] The two most important technical treatises on medieval artillery are the military manual of Mardī b. ʿAlī b. Mardī al-Tarsūsī, *Tabṣirat arbāb al-albāb fī kayfiyat al-najāḥ fī al-ḥurūb min al-aswāʾ wa-nashr aʿlām al-iʿlām fī al-ʿudad wa-al-ālāt al-muʿīnah ʿalá liqāʾ al-aʿdāʾ [Instructions of the Masters on the Means of Deliverance in Wars from Disasters, and the Unfurling of the Banners of Information: Equipment and Engines which Aid in Encounters with Enemies]* (MS 264, Huntington Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford; MS 2848 mū, Ayasofya Collection, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul) and *Kitāb anīq fī al-manājanīq (An Elegant Book on Trebuchets)* by Ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh (MS 3469/1, Ahmet III Collection, Topkapi Saray Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul). The first treatise contains the earliest full-length description of the counterweight trebuchet and illustrations and descriptions of four different types of traction trebuchets. This treatise was written for Saladin around 583/1187 and is one of the most important military works produced in Islam during the Middle Ages. The section of this treatise dealing with artillery has been published by Claude Cahen ("Un traité d'armurerie composé pour Saladin," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 12 [1947–48], 103–63). The second Arabic treatise is the longest and most profusely illustrated work in any language dealing with the trebuchet. This treatise, written by Ibn Urunbughā al-Zaradkāsh in 867/1462–63, is not only the most important work in any language on the trebuchet, it is one of the most important martial technical treatises produced during the Middle Ages. Two editions of this manuscript have appeared, both entitled *al-Anīq fī al-manājanīq*. The first is edited by Nabīl Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Aḥmad (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Miṣrīyah, 1981), and the second by Iḥsān Hindī (Aleppo: Institute for the History of Arabic Science, 1985).

[10] The question of the survival of the torsion-powered *onager* must remain beyond the scope of this paper. Conclusive documentation would require a monographic-length analysis of both late antique and medieval sources.

[11] E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Historical Development* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 198, and his *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 234–65.

[12] Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma rei militaris*, ed. and trans. Leo F. Stelten (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 4.22. While most scholars agree that the *Epitoma* was produced in the western Empire, its date and the identity of the emperor to whom it was dedicated are still in dispute. Three emperors have been suggested as possible dedicatees: Theodosius I (379–95), Honorius (393–423), and Valentinian III (425–55). For a discussion of the dating problem, see Vegetius, pp. xiii–xv, and *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, trans. N. P. Milner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), pp. xxv–xxix. In the most recent assessment of the dating question by Milner (cited above), Theodosius I is judged to be the most likely dedicatee.

Ammianus Marcellinus,[13] the Anonymus who authored *De rebus bellicis*,[14] and Procopius[15] – provide, according to Marsden, "sufficient indirect or implied evidence" to indicate that the standard bolt-projector of late antiquity was the two-armed torsion catapult.[16] If this conclusion stands, the "continuists" may well argue that torsion artillery was used in the Middle Ages, since the manuscript tradition related to this artillery certainly did continue during the medieval period in the Byzantine Empire. If books on torsion artillery continued to be copied and read in the Middle Ages – even if only in one of the three civilizational orders of the Mediterranean world – such artillery may have been built, and, if built, transmitted to other societies by military engineers who operated within an international network of contacts and patronage much as they do today. Before examining these texts, a brief overview of ancient artillery is appropriate.

## II. Ancient Artillery

In the Mediterranean world, the Greeks were the first to invent artillery. The earliest piece of artillery is traditionally credited to engineers working under Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse. In 399 B.C. they invented the tension catapult, consisting of a large composite bow fixed to a wooden stock, in which a wooden slider could move back and forth. The top of the slider was grooved to receive a large arrow or bolt. A claw-and-trigger device for grasping and releasing the bowstring was fixed to the top rear of the slider. The slider was pushed forward until the claw could be hooked over the bowstring. To span the weapon, the operator forced the slider to the rear by putting the front of the slider against a stationary surface and pushing against the crescent-shaped butt of the stock with

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[13] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, ed. Wolfgang Seyfarth, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1978), p. 299 (23.4.1–3), and the ed. and trans. by J. C. Rolfe, Vol. 2 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), pp. 324–27 (23.4.1–3). The extant books of the history of Ammianus (14–31) cover the years 354 to 378, which fall within the author's own lifetime. His description of artillery forms part of his narrative of Julian's expedition against the Sassanian Empire in the year 363.

[14] E. A. Thompson, trans., *A Roman Reformer and Inventor: Being a New Text of the Treatise "De rebus bellicis"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2: *"De rebus bellicis": The Text*, ed. Robert Ireland, B. A. R. International Series, 63 (Oxford: B. A. R., 1979). According to the most recent study of the dating of *De rebus bellicis*, this work was written c. 368–69 (Alan Cameron, "The Date of the Anonymus *De rebus bellicis*," in *De rebus bellicis*, Part 1: *Aspects of the "De rebus bellicis": Papers Presented to Professor E. A. Thompson*, ed. M. W. C. Hassall, B. A. R. International Series, 63 [Oxford: B. A. R., 1979], pp. 1–7).

[15] Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, in *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, ed. Jacob Haury, re-ed. Gerhard Wirth, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1963), p. 106–07 (1.21.14–18), and his *Works*, ed. and trans. H. B. Dewing, Vol. 3 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), p. 204–07. Procopius, who lived during the reign of Justinian (527–65), was contemporary to the period about which he writes. He describes artillery in his account of the siege of Rome by the Goths in 537–38.

[16] Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 234–48.

his stomach. A linear ratchet and pawl system locked the slider solidly to the stock and resisted the force of the bow. When the tension was sufficient, the operator placed a bolt in the groove and aimed the weapon at his target. The bolt was discharged by pulling the trigger – a transverse lever – which when forced back allowed the claw to pivot upward, thus releasing the bowstring. Since the operator used his stomach to span the machine manually, it was appropriately called a *gastraphetes* or "belly-bow."[17] This early catapult was a hand-held bolt-projector which could be utilized by foot soldiers. Later, larger catapults were built, mounted on stands, which utilized mechanical pull-back systems, such as a circular ratchet at the rear of the stock, to span the bow. With these improvements, stone-projecting catapults became technically feasible with two slight modifications: widening the groove in the slider and adding a pouch with a loop on its rear side to the bowstring.

By 340 B.C. the improved tension catapult was superseded by the more powerful torsion catapult, which replaced the bow with two vertical springs made of ropes of sinew or hair, each set in a frame on either side of the stock of the machine. A solid wooden arm was inserted horizontally through the middle of each spring and a bowstring was fitted into the notch at the end of each of the arms. The rest of the machine was essentially the same as that of a tension catapult. Hellenistic engineers developed a number of different models of bolt-projecting and stone-projecting, two-armed torsion catapults, but these machines corresponded to two basic types: "straight-spring" (*euthytonos*) bolt-projectors and "back-stretched spring" (*palintonos*) stone-projectors. The palintone engine had springs which extended the forward swing of the arms much further than the euthytone engine, enabling the springs to exert their force on the arms for a longer period than the springs of the euthytone engine. The more powerful palintone torsion catapult was typically a stone-projector, while the less powerful euthytone torsion catapult was always a bolt-projector.

Rome obtained its knowledge of artillery from the Greeks and promoted the development of the catapult, relying on the skilled engineers of the Hellenistic world (fig. 1). From the Republican through the early Imperial period, Rome made several significant improvements in catapult design, including: (1) a more efficient system for tightening the torsion springs, which made it far easier for the operator to tighten the cord bundles and keep them equally balanced; (2) the use of oval, rather than circular, spring holes and washers for stone-projecting catapults which permitted a cord bundle of greater mass to be employed, thereby increasing the power of the machine; (3) the use of curved, rather than straight, arms for bolt-projecting catapults that increased the angle of the twist and gave the machine more power; and (4) the complete plating of the wooden frame of the catapult with metal sheets to protect the machine from the ravages of weather and enemy counter-battery.[18] During the second half of the first century,

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[17] C. Wescher, *Poliorcétique des grecs* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1867), pp. 75–81; Marsden, *Historical Development*, pp. 5–12, and *Technical Treatises*, pp. 20–23.

[18] The improved system for tightening the torsion springs can be seen on the catapult found

Roman artillery was radically transformed with the introduction of a new type of catapult having all-metal tension-frames which were both wider and lower than the tension-frames of Hellenistic catapults and more widely-spaced than the tension-frames of earlier artillery (fig. 7). These frames were more durable than wooden ones and could be easily replaced if damaged. The tension-frames were encased in cone-topped metal cylinders to protect them from damp and counter-battery from the enemy, creating a catapult with all-weather capability for the first time. The arms of the catapult had a greater freedom of travel than earlier catapults, giving it considerably more power than wooden-framed cata-pults of corresponding size. Heron's *Cheiroballistra* and the artillery on Trajan's Column (see below) provide evidence for the new Roman catapult design, and remains of this new artillery have been examined in detail by Dietwulf Baatz.[19] The standard stone-projector of Imperial Rome, which continued in use through the third century, was the two-armed, wooden-framed torsion catapult. It was similar to its Hellenistic counterpart but its tension-frames, like those of the new Roman bolt-projecting catapult, were lower and more widely-spaced than the tension-frames of Hellenistic stone-projectors.[20]

in 1912 at Ampurius (ancient Emporion) in Spain which dates from the middle of the second century B.C. On the Ampurius catapult and its system for tightening the torsion springs, see Erwin Schramm, *Die Antiken Geschütze de Saalburg* (1918; reprint, Bad Homburg: Saalburg-museum, 1980), pp. 40–46; Marsden, *Historical Development*,p. 29, and *Technical Treatises*, pp. 53–54; J. G. Landels, *Engineering in the Ancient World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 115. Similar spanning systems for torsion springs, consisting of a movable spanning washer and a fixed counter-plate, have been studied by Dietwulf Baatz in "Teile Hellenistischer Geschütze aus Griechenland," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1979), 68–75, and "Ein Katapult der *Legio IV Macedonica* aus Cremona," *Römische Mitteilungen* 87 (1980), 283–99 and "Hellenistische Katapulte aus Ephyra [Epirus]," *Athenische Mitteilungen* 97 (1982), 211–33, and "Katapultteile aus dem Schiffswrack von Mahdia [Tunesien]," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1985), 677–91, and "Eine Katapult-Spannbuchse aus Pityus, Georgien [UDSSR]," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 44 (1988), 59–64. The spring holes and washers of the stone-projecting *ballista* of Vitruvius are oval rather than circular in order to increase the mass of the cord bundle without increasing the size of the whole machine (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 191, 201 n. 28 and fig. 8). Vitruvius' bolt-projecting "scorpion" utilized curved arms to increase the path over which the arms travel (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 183–205, 229–30). The covering of the wooden frame of the catapult with metal sheets is confirmed by both archeological and artistic evidence. The sheet of bronze that covered the front of a catapult constructed in A.D. 45 and used in the second battle of Cremona in A.D. 69 has been recovered, as well as sheets of bronze that covered the front and sides of the Hatra *ballista*, dating from the third century A.D. A bas-relief of a bolt-projecting catapult from the tombstone of Vedennius, dating from the end of the first century A.D., clearly shows a metal sheet covering the front of the machine (Baatz, "Ein Katapult der *Legio IV Macedonica* aus Cremona,"*Römische Mitteilungen* 87 (1980), 283–99; Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 185, pl. 1; and n. 20 below), and similar metal sheets cover the fronts of wooden-frame bolt-projecting catapults depicted on the Flavian relief pillars now in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence (Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, pp. 37–39, figs. 12–13).

[19] Nicolae Gudea and Dietwulf Baatz, "Teile Spätrömischer Ballisten aus Gornea und Orşova (Rumänien)," *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 31 (1974), 50–72; Dietwulf Baatz, "Recent Finds of Ancient Artillery," *Britannia* 9 (1978), pp. 2, 9–17, pls. 2, 5; and Dietwulf Baatz and Michel Feugère, "Éléments d'une catapulte romaine trouvée à Lyon," *Gallia* 39 (1981), 201–09.

[20] Baatz, "Recent Finds," pp. 1–9, pls. 1–4; his "The Hatra Ballista," *Sumer* 33.1 (1977), 141–51; and "Das Torsionsgeschütz von Hatra," *Antike Welt* 9.4 (1978), 50–57. The Hatra

During the fourth century classical artillery underwent a change in terminology. The word *ballista*, which in the Republican period had referred to a two-armed torsion stone-projector, came to signify a bolt-projector in the fourth century. New compound forms of the term *ballista* appear – *arcuballista*, *manuballista*, and *carroballista* – and these, too, signified bolt-projectors. Many of the changes reflected in this new terminology were underway by the second half of the first century when Rome introduced its most advanced artillery. The term *ballista* was probably applied to the new metal-framed, bolt-projecting catapult, since it was constructed in the palintone form, just like the palintone stone-projecting catapult. Marsden speculates that the term *ballista* may have been used interchangeably for both the new bolt-projector and the two-armed torsion catapult during the period that both machines were in use.[21] By the fourth century the old two-armed, wooden-framed stone-projector was replaced by the one-armed, torsion-driven sling machine known as the *onager*, or "wild ass," so named because "wild asses, when hunted in the chase, throw up stones so high behind their backs by kicking that they penetrate the chests of the their pursuers or actually break their bones and smash their skulls."[22] This machine consisted of a horizontal torsion-spring housed in a heavy wooden frame with a massive arm inserted through the middle of the spring. A sling, containing a stone missile, was attached to the extremity of the arm, and a windlass was used to draw down the arm to the frame of the machine. Once released, the arm shot upward, the sling opened, and the missile flew towards its target. A cushion, mounted on a subsidiary framework above the main frame of the machine, absorbed some of the kinetic energy of the arm and halted its motion.

Why did the simpler, cruder, more cumbersome *onager* replace the more advanced and complex two-armed torsion catapult as Rome's sole stone-projecting ordnance? Landels suggests that it was due to the decline in technical know-how in the Roman Empire.

> [The *onager*] was probably a good deal easier and simpler to make than the two-spring stone-thrower, and it did not require so much maintenance or adjustments such as the balancing of the springs, or accurate alignment of the slider and trough. So long as the available technical skills were adequate for this, the two-spring machine had the obvious advantage of better performance, but in later days, when craftsmanship declined, the simpler and cruder machine became preferable.[23]

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*ballista*, a two-armed torsion catapult, was initially thought to be an *onager* (see Ṣalāḥ Ḥusayn, "Manjanīq min al-Ḥaḍr," *Sumer* 32.1–2 (1976), 121–34).

[21] Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 189.

[22] Ammianus, *Res gestae*, 23.4.7; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 250–51. For a discussion of the *onager*, see Erwin Schramm, "Μονάγκων und Onager," *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 2 (1918), 259–71, and his *Antiken Geschütze*, pp. 70–74, pl. 10; Ralph Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow, Medieval and Modern, Military and Sporting: Its Construction, History and Management with a Treatise on the Ballista and Catapult of the Ancients and an Appendix on the Catapult, Ballista and the Turkish Bow*, 2nd ed. (London: Holland Press, 1958), App., pp. 10–18; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 249–65; Landels, pp. 130–32.

[23] Landels, p. 132.

If we accept Landels' thesis for the demise of the two-armed torsion stone-projector and the appearance of the *onager*, how can the alleged survival of the two-armed torsion catapult, now used solely as a bolt-projector, be explained? If technical skills did, indeed, decline, one would expect this highly sophisticated machine to have been phased out as well. And this appears to be what happened. The fifth century most likely saw the disappearance of the two-armed torsion catapult and its replacement by the tension catapult. Marsden has argued that all bolt-projectors of late antiquity, save for Vegetius' *arcuballista*, were torsion-powered machines.[24] Bert S. Hall has gone further and suggested that even the *arcuballista* was a torsion machine.[25] An examination of the descriptions of artillery found in texts dating from the fourth to the sixth century will help to clarify the matter.

## III. Bolt-Projecting Artillery of Late Antiquity

### A. Bolt-projecting artillery of Vegetius

Vegetius mentions artillery but has little to say about its construction and operation. He identifies five different types of artillery: a one-armed torsion stone-projector known as the *onager* and four bolt-projecting machines. These bolt-projectors are identified under the terms *ballista*,[26] *carroballista* (carriage-mounted *ballista*),[27] *manuballista* (hand-*ballista*) or *scorpio* (scorpion),[28] and *arcuballista* (bow-*ballista*).[29] Vegetius provides his most detailed account of artillery in Chapter 22 of Book 4 of *Epitoma rei militaris*, in which he mentions all of the pieces of artillery except the *carroballista*. Marsden drew attention to a portion of this chapter to bolster his claim that the standard catapult of the fourth century A.D. was a torsion machine. An examination of the full chapter will indicate that other interpretations are possible.

*Epitoma rei militaris*, 4.22

De ballistis, onagris, scorpionibus, arcuballistis, fustibalis, fundis per quae tormenta defenditur murus[30]

Adversum haec obsessos defendere consueverunt ballistae, onageri, scor-piones, arcuballistae, fustibali, sagittarii fundae. Ballista funibus nervinis tendi-tur, quae, quanto prolixiora brachiola habuerit, hoc est quanto maior fuerit,

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[24] Marsden, *Historical Development*, pp. 2, 188–98, and *Technical Treatises*, pp. 234–48.

[25] Bert S. Hall, "Crossbows and Crosswords," rev. of *Greek and Roman Artillery: Historical Development* and *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* by E. W. Marsden, *Isis* 64 (1973), 527–33.

[26] Vegetius, 2.10 (*ballistae*), 3.3 (*ballistisque*), 4.9 (*ballistae, ballistas*), 4.10 (*ballistas*), 4.18 (*ballistas, ballistae*), 4.22 (*ballistae, ballista*), 4.29 (*ballistae*), 4.44 (*ballistis, ballistas*).

[27] Vegetius, 2.25 (*carroballistas, carroballistae*), 3.14 (*carroballistae*), 3.24 (*carroballistas*).

[28] Vegetius, 2.15 (*manuballistas*), 3.14 (*manuballistarii*), 4.21 (*manuballistarii*), 4.22 (*manuballistas, scorpiones*), 4.44 (*scorpionibus*).

[29] Vegetius, 2.15 (*arcuballistas*), 4.21 (*arcuballistarii*), 4.22 (*arcuballistae, arcuballistas*).

[30] Vegetius, 4.22.

tanto spicula longius mittit; quae si juxta artem mechanicam temperetur et ab exercitatis hominibus, qui mensuram eius ante collegerint, dirigatur, penetrat quodcumque percusserit. Onager autem dirigit lapides, sed pro nervorum crassitudine et magnitudine saxorum pondera iaculatur; nam quanto amplior fuerit, tanto maiora saxa fulminis more contorquet. His duobus generibus nulla tormentorum species vehementior invenitur. Scorpiones dicebant, quas nunc manuballistas vocant; ideo sic nuncupati, quod parvis subtilibusque spiculis inferant mortem. Fustibalos, arcuballistas et fundas describere superfluum puto, quae praesens usus agnoscit. Saxis tamen gravioribus per onagrum destinatis non solum equi eliduntur et homines sed etiam hostium machinamenta franguntur.

Concerning *ballistae, onagers,* scorpions, bow-*ballistae,* staff-slings, and slings: Missile-launching devices by which the wall is defended

Against these machines[31] the *ballistae, onagers,* scorpions, bow-*ballistae,* staff-slings, arrows, and slings were usually used to defend the besieged. The *ballista* is strung with sinew-ropes.[32] The longer the arms it has — that is, the larger it is — the further it shoots its bolts. If it is tuned[33] according to mechanical rules and if it is aimed by trained men who have assembled data on its range,[34] it penetrates whatever it hits. The *onager,* however, throws stones of different weights according to the thickness and extent of its sinew-bundle; for the larger it is, the bigger the stones it can hurl, in the manner of a thunderbolt. One can find no piece of artillery which is more powerful than these two types [the *ballista* and *onager*]. Hand-*ballistae,* which used to be called "scorpions," were so designated because they kill by means of small and slender bolts. It is superfluous to describe staff-slings, bow-*ballistae,* and slings, since they are so well-known by present-day use. The stones thrown by the *onager* are of such great weight that they not only crush to death horses and men, but they even shatter the siege machines of the enemy.

Marsden concluded from the description of the *ballista* in this chapter that the standard bolt-projector of the fourth century was a torsion machine. However, Vegetius does not employ *ballista* as a generic term for all bolt-projectors, but for a specific type of large bolt-projecting engine, which is quite obviously a base-mounted, two-armed torsion catapult. According to him, this machine was used in the defense of cities[35] and aboard ships in naval warfare.[36] Aside from its

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[31] These machines are the ones mentioned in *Epitoma,* 4.21: the scaling-ladder (*scala*), a mechanized scaling-ladder called a *sambuca,* the boarding plank of a mobile siege tower (*exostra*), and a rotating-beam device for hoisting men onto walls (*tolleno*).

[32] Marsden has translated this passage as, "the *ballista* is powered by sinew-ropes" (*Technical Treatises,* p. 237).

[33] On the translation of *temperare* as "to tune," see Marsden, *Technical Treatises,* p. 237, n. 3, and Vitruvius, *De architectura,* ed. and trans. Frank Granger, Vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 10.11.9, 10.12.1–2.

[34] On the translation of *mensuram* as "range," see Marsden, *Technical Treatises,* p. 237, n. 4. Marsden has observed that Vegetius seems to indicate here that there are experts who know how to build and tune a *ballista* and those who are trained in shooting the machine. Additional evidence presented by Campbell corroborates this conclusion (Duncan B. Campbell, "Auxiliary Artillery Revisited," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 186 [1986], 118).

[35] Vegetius, 3.3, 4.9, 4.10, 4.18, 4.22, 4.29.

[36] Vegetius, 4.44.

use in naval engagements, the *ballista* was strictly used in siege operations, employed by besieger and besieged alike. It is cited along with other siege engines (battering-rams, *onagers*, and other missile-launching devices) as part of the equipment of an expeditionary force.[37] Vegetius does mention *ballistarii* (literally, *ballista*-men) in the context of field warfare, and it is clear that he intends the term to refer to *manuballistarii* or *arcuballistarii*, not to the crew that operated the *ballista* or to the artisans who manufactured it.[38] A number of *ballistae* are shown on Trajan's Column, built in A.D. 113. One is depicted being hauled up a mountain track on a mule-drawn transport-wagon.[39] Two others are displayed on the battlements of a Roman fort,[40] another is positioned in front of this fort in an advanced emplacement described as an artillery "pill-box,"[41] and Dacian defenders are shown operating their own *ballista* behind a wooden palisade.[42] These *ballistae* are all of a standard type: a two-armed, metal-framed torsion catapult mounted on a base-tripod. The sinew-bundles are protected by cone-topped metal cylinders and the upper metal strut holding the tension-frames in place are clearly shown with a distinctive arch in the center (figs. 2–5).

Following his remarks on the *ballista* and *onager* in the above passage, Vegetius goes on to mention two other pieces of artillery: the *manuballista* (hand-*ballista*), or "scorpion," and the *arcuballista* (bow-*ballista*). The only information provided on the *manuballista* is that it shoots small and slender bolts, which suggests that it was a small machine.[43] Its name suggests that it was

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[37] Vegetius, 2.10.

[38] Vegetius, 2.2; cf. 2.15, 3.14. Vegetius (3.24) also mentions *ballista*-bolts (*sagittis ballista-riis*) being shot by *carroballistae*.

[39] Conrad Cichorius, *Trajan's Column: A New Edition of the Cichorius Plates*, eds. Frank Lepper and Sheppard Frere (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988), pp. 106–07, pl. 46 (lxvi/163–64); I. A. Richmond, "Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 13 (1935), 14, and his "Roman Artillery," *Durham University Journal* 7 (March 1946), 62; Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, p. 32, fig. 8, p. 60, fig. 26; Marsden, *Historical Development*, pl. 10, and *Technical Treatises*, pl. 10.

[40] Cichorius, pp. 106–07, pl. 47 (lxvi/165); Marsden, *Historical Development*, pl. 11, and *Technical Treatises*, pl. 11.

[41] Cichorius, pp. 106–07, pl. 47 (lxvi/166); Marsden, *Historical Development*, pl. 12, and *Technical Treatises*, pl. 12.

[42] Cichorius, pp. 106–08, pl. 48 (lxvi/169); Marsden, *Historical Development*, pl. 13, and *Technical Treatises*, p. 13.

[43] Vernard L. Foley has suggested to me that Vegetius' reference to the bolts of the *manu-ballista* being small and slender indicates that these projectiles could not have been the heavy conical bolts which were discharged by larger static catapults. On these conical bolts, see Harald von Petrikovits, "Eine Pilumspitze von der Grotenburg bei Detmold," *Germania* 29(1951), 206–08; Dietwulf Baatz, "Zur Geschützbewaffnung römischer Auxiliartruppenin in der frühen und mittleren Kaiserzeit," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 166 (1966), 203–07, and "Hellenistische Kata-pulte aus Ephyra (Epirus)," 239–32, and "Eine Katapult-Spannbuchse aus Pityus, Georgien (UDSSR)," 63–64; Baatz and Feugère, p. 208; Vernard Foley, George Palmer, and Werner Soedel, "The Crossbow," *Scientific American* 252 (January 1985), 107–10; L. H. Barfield, "Ein Burgus in Froitzheim, Kreis Düren," in *Beiträge zur Archäologie des römischen Rheinlands*, ed. L. H. Barfield et al., Vol. 1 (Düsseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag, 1968), pp. 8–11, 13–14, fig. 46; Raymond Brulet, *La fortification de Hauterecenne à Furfooz* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Supérieur d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art, 1978), pp. 13–14, fig. 77; Jean-Pierre Lemant,

a hand-held weapon, and a description of its Greek counterpart, designated by the Greek equivalent of *manuballista* (*chieroballistra* = hand-*ballista*), indicates that it was a hand-held weapon (see below). No details are provided for the *arcuballista*, but since it is mentioned in the context of other light weapons (the sling and staff-sling), it, too, must have been a small bolt-projector.

Marsden has interpreted the statement by Vegetius concerning the collection of sinew for artillery to imply that the conventional bolt-projectors of Vegetius' day had torsion springs. Vegetius states:

> It is also essential that a supply of sinews be collected with the utmost zeal, because *onagers* or *ballistae*, and other artillery are useless unless strung with sinew-ropes.[44]

Marsden translated "other artillery" (*ceteraque tormenta*) as "other torsion engines" and suggested that this phrase referred to the *carroballista* and *manuballista*. While *tormentum* originally referred to artillery with torsion springs, it came to be used as a general term for any missile-projecting device. By the fourth century, the term *tormentum* was not used exclusively to refer to torsion artillery. Vegetius categorizes *ballistae*, *onagers*, scorpions, and bow-*ballistae*, as well as staff-slings and slings, as *tormenta*.[45] The verb "to string" (*intenta*) may refer to the bracing of a hand-bow or the stringing of a tension or torsion catapult. If the machine had torsion springs, this verb would indicate the action of wrapping and stretching the sinew-ropes on the tension-frames of the catapult. If it were tension-powered, this verb would refer to the bracing of the machine as it was fitted with a bowstring. The sinews which Vegetius says should be collected for the artillery may have been used either for the bowstring of a tension catapult or the sinew-bundle of a torsion machine (*onager* or *ballista*). Following the statement regarding the collection of sinews, Vegetius devotes nearly the entire remaining portion of the chapter to the *ballista* and speaks of the use of horsehair and human hair in the torsion springs of this machine. Since Vegetius does not use the term *ballista* in a generic sense to indicate all bolt-projecting catapults, his remarks here on the *ballista* do not imply that his statement on sinews refers only to their use in torsion machines.

It cannot be assumed that the various compound forms of *ballista* (*carroballista*, *manuballista*, and *arcuballista*) necessarily refer to torsion engines. These machines were light and mobile enough to be used in field warfare. The *manu-*

*Le cimetière et la fortification du Bas-Empire de Vireux-Molhain, dép. Ardennes* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 1985), pp. 63–69, fig. 67; W. J. H. Willems, "An Officer or a Gentleman? A Late-Roman Weapon-Grave from a Villa at Voerendaal (NL)," in *Roman Military Equipment: The Sources of Evidence, Proceedings of the Fifth Roman Military Equipment Conference*, ed. C. van Driel-Murray (Oxford: B. A. R., 1989), pp. 149–51. These conical bolts are too heavy for hand-held bolt-projectors, so the reference to small and slender bolts indicates that the *manuballista* was a hand-held bolt-projector.

[44] Vegetius, 4.9: "Nervorum quoque copiam summo studio expedit colligi quia onagri vel ballistae ceteraque tormenta nisi funibus nervinis intenta nihil prosunt."

[45] Vegetius, 4.22.

*ballista* and *arcuballista* were used on mobile siege-towers to drive defenders from the wall, which indicates that they were capable of a rapid sequence of discharge and, hence, must have been rather small antipersonnel weapons.[46] Their relative size can be determined by where they were placed on the field of battle. According to Vegetius, the army formed up in six parallel lines. Just behind the first line *tragularii* were stationed armed with *manuballistae* and *arcuballistae*.[47] *Carroballistae* and *manuballistae* were sometimes placed in the fifth battle line,[48] and in the rear, the larger *carroballistae*, having the greatest range, were positioned.[49] The location of the *carroballista*, or carriage-mounted *ballista*, in the formation of battle indicates that it was the largest piece of artillery used in field warfare. According to Vegetius, it was mounted on small carts drawn by two horses or mules and was serviced by an artillery crew of eleven men.[50] Two *carroballistae* are shown on Trajan's Column (fig. 6), which indicates that these catapults were in service in the early part of the second century and used in Trajan's Dacian campaigns.[51] Once the Romans had developed metal tension-frames for catapults and weatherproofed the new artillery pieces by enclosing the sinew-bundles in cylindrical metal cases, truly mobile field artillery became possible. Since the new Roman catapult design was probably introduced during the second half of the first century, the *carroballista* can be dated to this same period. When the *carroballista* first appeared, it was a two-armed torsion catapult, but it need not have remained a torsion machine. Anonymus describes a carriage-mounted *ballista* which is most probably a tension catapult (see below), indicating that by the fourth century the *carroballista* may have been a tension, not a torsion, machine. If the *carroballista* started out as a torsion engine, it may have eventually evolved into a tension machine.

Marsden stated that the *arcuballista*, from which the French term *arbalest* and other cognates are derived, was the ancestor of the medieval crossbow.[52] Hall has challenged this opinion, contending that the *arcuballista* was a two-armed torsion catapult.[53] Two Gallo-Roman stone reliefs of hunting scenes, which date

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[46] Vegetius, 4.21.

[47] Vegetius, 2.15.

[48] Vegetius, 3.14.

[49] Vegetius, 2.25, 3.24.

[50] Vegetius, 2.25, 3.24.

[51] Cichorius, pp. 88, 106, 107, 268, pl. 31 (xl/104–05); Richmond, "Trajan's Army," pp. 13–14, and "Roman Artillery," p. 62; Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, p. 31, fig. 7; Marsden, *Historical Development*, pl. 9, and *Technical Treatises*, pl. 9. I. A. Richmond has suggested, *contra* Schramm and Marsden, that the carriage for the *carroballista* was not an ordinary cart for the transport of an artillery piece to some emplacement, as shown on Trajan's Column (Cichorius, pp. 106–07, pl. 46 [lxvi/163–64]). Rather, it was "a very stoutly built two-wheeled carriage of special design . . . built so low and so strong at the back as to suggest that it served as gun-carriage and ammunition-cart at one and the same time, with a rearward hopper for ammunition" (Richmond, "Roman Artillery," p. 62; Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, pp. 30–32; Marsden, *Historical Development*, pp. 180, 192, 196).

[52] Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 2.

[53] Hall argues that the "bow" of the "bow-*ballista*" (*arcuballista*) referred to the inverted U-bend in the middle of the upper strut which held the tension-frames of a two-armed torsion

from the second or third century, clearly depict crossbows.[54] The thickness and design of the bows suggest that they were of composite construction. Neither weapon is provided with a mechanical pull-back system or a crescent-shaped rest at the rear of the stock for spanning the bow, indicating that they were either spanned by hand or by using a belt and claw spanning device. The mechanism used to retain the drawn bowstring is shown in one of the relief carvings (that found at Polignac) to be a nut revolving within the stock. Since no trigger mechanism is depicted on top of the stock, similar to the lever-hinged trigger mechanism of the *gastraphetes*, the trigger must have been inserted in the body of the stock and operated from below. The employment of such a trigger mechanism gives clear indication that the Roman crossbow was the ancestor of the medieval crossbow.

These reliefs also provide unambiguous evidence for the use of the crossbow during the Roman period for hunting purposes. It would seem natural for the Romans to devise a military use for the weapon, even if it were only utilized on a limited basis. Arrian (*c.* A.D. 96–180), a Greek historian who held command in the Roman army, describes a cavalry exercise in his military treatise in which a bolt-projecting machine is discharged from horseback: "there are performed shootings of various kinds, with light darts or bolts, these being shot not from a bow, but from a 'machine' (μηχανή)."[55] Howard L. Blackmore has concluded that this passage implies the use of "some form of hand crossbow."[56] Duncan B. Campbell, who has analyzed the same passage, provides a useful discussion of the many and varied meanings of μηχανή (*mēchanēā*) – which include artillery of

catapult in place. He maintains this position even though he admits that, "the word – 'bow-ballista' – certainly sounds like a crossbow's name; certainly it gave rise to the later French *arbalest*, meaning crossbow; and certainly medieval vernacular versions of the *Epitoma rei militaris* translated it as crossbow" (Hall, p. 532). Hall's view has not gone unchallenged (Campbell, p. 131, n. 96).

[54] These stone reliefs, originally from Polignac and Saint-Marcel, are now in the Musée Crozatier in Le Puy in the Haute Loire region of south central France. For a brief description and illustration of both reliefs, see Émile Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs de Gaule romaine*, Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, série VI/9, Vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1908), p. 442 (no. 1679), pp. 443–44 (no. 1683). The most important analysis of these reliefs for the information they provide on the construction of the Roman crossbow has been made by Dietwulf Baatz, "Die Römische Jagdarmbrust," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 21 (1991), 283–90; see also Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, pp. 18–19, fig. 4; Howard L. Blackmore, *Hunting Weapons* (New York: Walker & Co., 1971), p. 174; Egon Harmuth, *Die Armbrust* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975), pp. 18–19; Arthur MacGregor, "Two Antler Crossbow Nuts and Some Notes on the Early Development of the Crossbow," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 107 (1975–76), 319; T. G. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen: Ein Beitrag zur Byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur Lateinischen Eroberung*, Byzantina Vindobonensia, Vol. 17 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischer Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), pp. 240–41. Eric McGeer kindly alerted me to this last publication.

[55] Arrian, *Tactica*, in *Flavii Arriani quae exstant omnia*, Vol. 2 of *Scripta minora et fragmenta*, ed. A. G. Roos, re-ed. G. Wirth (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1968), p. 175 (43.1). I have used Blackmore's translation of this passage (p. 174).

[56] Blackmore, p. 174.

all types, cranes, scaling ladders, battering rams, mobile siege towers, flame-throwers, and mantlets – but he is reluctant to conclude that Arrian's "machine" is a crossbow, although he suggests that it may have been.[57] While it is possible that Arrian's "machine" may be a bow equipped with an arrow-guide, the evidence for the existence of the crossbow in Roman times suggests that this "machine" was, in fact, a crossbow.[58] Campbell has suggested that the "*ballista-men*" (*ballistarii*) which formed part of a mounted rapid deployment force organized by Julian to conduct a quick strike against the Alemanni in A.D. 356 were armed not with conventional torsion *ballistae*, which would have been impossible to transport on horseback, but with hand-held weapons. He con-cludes that these weapons were "related to those shown on the Gallo-Roman reliefs."[59] It is most likely, therefore, that Julian's *ballistarii* were armed with

[57] Campbell's study is not focused on the crossbow but on the use of artillery by auxiliary troops in the Roman army, for which he does not find evidence, except in some extraordinary cases. His interest in Arrian's "machine" is not to prove that it was a crossbow but to disprove that it was a piece of artillery. Hence, he goes no further than to indicate that his "machine" was some kind of hand-held mechanical weapon, which he states was obviously some form of *ballista*, perhaps even an *arcuballista*. Unfortunately, he does not define what an *arcuballista* was, but merely suggests that it may be identical with the crossbows depicted in the Gallo-Roman reliefs from Polignac and Saint-Marcel (Campbell, pp. 126–32).

[58] The arrow-guide is a tubular piece of wood used with a hand-bow to shoot small bolts. It has no mechanical pull-back system or locking mechanism. For Islamic arrow-guides, see Nabih A. Faris and Robert P. Elmer, *Arab Archery: An Arabic Manuscript of about 1500 "A Book on the Excellence of the Bow and Arrow" and the Description thereof* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 126–27, 130, 175–76; Cahen, pp. 110–11, 132–33, 153–54; J. D. Latham and W. F. Paterson, *Saracen Archery: An English Version and Exposition of a Mameluke Work on Archery (ca. A.D. 1368)* (London: Holland Press, 1970), pp. 106–07, 145–51; E. McEwen, "Persian Archery Texts: Chapter Eleven of Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adāb al-Harb* (Early Thirteenth Century)," *Islamic Quarterly* 18 (1974), 91; Ahmad b. Yahyá al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-buldān*, ed. Michael Jan De Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1866), p. 260; Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusūl wa-al-mulūk (Annales)*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., Series 3, Vols. 12–13 (1879–1901; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), pp. 1579, 1626, 1982, 2003, 2004, 2054. For Byzantine arrow-guides, see David Nishimura, "Crossbows, Arrow-Guides, and the *Solenarion*," *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 422–35. For the arrow-guides of India, see G. N. Pant, *Studies in Indian Weapons and Warfare* (New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1970), p. 48, *Indian Arms and Armour*, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1978), p. 107, pls. 74, 77, 78, and *Indian Archery* (New Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1978), pp. 197–98. For Korean arrow-guides, see Walter Hough, "Korean Crossbow and Arrow-tube," *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 1 (January 1899), 200; D. Elmy, "Korean Archery Accessories," *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries* 22 (1979), 9–10, and "Korean Mounted Archery," *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries* 27 (1984), 48.

[59] Campbell, pp. 131–32; Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.2.5. P. de Jonge also concludes that the *ballistarii* were mounted, like the armored horsemen (*catafractatii*) on the expedition, and were armed with *manuballistae* or *arcuballistae* (P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVI* [Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis n. v. Publishers, 1972], pp. 15–16). The *ballistarii* probably served as crossbow-armed mounted infantry, rather than mounted crossbowmen, since Roman troops would not have been able to reload a crossbow while mounted without the support provided by stirrups, which were unknown to the Romans. While it might be argued that both the *manuballista* and the *arcuballista* could have been carried by mounted infantry, the *ballistarii* were probably armed with the *arcuballista* or crossbow, since it was by far the less cumbersome of the two (see below) and the easiest to carry on

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crossbows. Since the term *ballistarii* is used here to refer to crossbowmen, not artillerymen, the sense of the term has clearly changed from its earlier classical meaning.[60] The new meaning which it has taken on here is the meaning that it will have throughout the Middle Ages in many of the vernacular languages of Europe.

The crossbow was invented by the Chinese sometime during the fifth century B.C. Unlike the *gastraphetes*, the Chinese crossbow employed a trigger mechanism which operated from the underside of the stock. By the time of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), it had become a standard military weapon in the Chinese army and featured an intricate trigger-mechanism made of cast bronze. This device, consisting of a triple compound lever, was inserted in the body of the stock and was operated from below.[61] The crossbow was probably introduced into the Roman Empire during the first century of our era. This would put it in the Mediterranean region just prior to Arrian's account of it and before the two stone reliefs which depict it were erected. Archeological finds in Western Europe of crossbow components and surviving depictions of crossbows dating from late antiquity and the early Middle Ages suggest that the crossbow enjoyed continuous use in the Latin West from Roman times.[62] In the realms of Islam the crossbow is first mentioned as being used in 881 during the course of the Zanj revolt in southern Mesopotamia. It is identified as a *qaws al-rijl* (foot-bow), indicating that it was spanned by the archer placing his feet on either side of the stock while pulling the bowstring back by hand or by using a belt and claw

horseback. J. C. Coulston also concludes that the *ballistarii* were armed with crossbows ("Roman Archery Equipment," in *The Production and Distribution of Roman Military Equipment*, Proceedings of the Second Roman Military Equipment Research Seminar, ed. M. C. Bishop [Oxford: B. A. R., 1985], p. 261).

[60] For other examples of terminology not keeping pace with technological changes, see H. W. L. Hime, *Gunpowder and Ammunition: Their Origin and Progress* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1904), pp. 8–9; David Ayalon, *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Kingdom: A Challenge to a Medieval Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1956), pp. 9–44; G. Hollister-Short, "The Vocabulary of Technology," *History of Technology* 2 (1977), 125–55; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 5, Part 7: *Military Technology: The Gunpowder Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11–12, 21–22, 131, 276–84.

[61] On the Chinese crossbow, see Blackmore, pp. 172–73; Needham, p. 465; Robin D. S. Yates, "Siege Engines and Late Zhou Military Technology," in *Explorations in the History of Science and Technology in China*, ed. Li Guohao, Zhang Mehgwen, and Cao Tianqin (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1982), pp. 432–43; Robert Roth, *Histoire de l'archerie: Arc et arbalète* (Montpellier: Max Chaleil, 1992), pp. 181–83; Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 9, 36–38, 74, 92.

[62] Blackmore, p. 178; A. G. Credland, "Crossbow Remains," *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries* 23 (1980), 12–19, pl. I, and "The Crossbow in Europe: An Historical Introduction," in W. F. Paterson, *A Guide to the Crossbow* (N.p: n.p., 1990; distributed by the Society of Archer-Antiquaries, Bridlington, England), pp. 13–18; John M. Gilbert, "Crossbows on Pictish Stones," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 107 (1975–76), 316–17; MacGregor, pp. 317–20. Campbell concludes that, "it seems probable that hand-held mechanical arms were used continuously from the third century B.C. through to the Byzantine period" (p. 132). Needham has suggested that the crossbow was probably introduced twice to Western Europe, before the fifth century and again during the tenth century (Needham, p. 465).

spanning device.[63] Although Arabic sources do not refer to the crossbow as being employed earlier than the ninth century, this does not preclude it being used prior to this date or indicate the discontinuance of the crossbow in the early Islamic period. Because of its relatively long reloading time, the crossbow was best suited for the attack and defense of strongpoints or aboard ships in battles at sea. Chroniclers of the early Islamic period rarely provide information on the small arms used in such encounters, so it is entirely possible that the crossbow continued in use in the Islamic world and that the *qaws al-rijl* became the prototype of more powerful crossbows developed later in the Middle East (e.g., the *zanbūrak* and *ziyār*). Historical references to the use of the crossbow in the Latin West are not found again until the tenth century when it is recorded being used at the siege of Senlis in 949 and at the siege of Verdun in 984.[64] More references to the crossbow are found in the eleventh century, and during the twelfth century, the crossbow appears to have developed into a truly formidable weapon, receiving both a papal condemnation and a famous description by Anna Comnena.[65] The notoriety that the crossbow attained at this time does not indicate, according to Blackmore, the appearance of a new weapon, but rather the improved performance of an old one, which he believes to be related to an advance in the construction of the composite bow or the development of an easier release mechanism.[66] According to Lynn White, Jr., the essential improvement which propelled the crossbow into widespread use was most probably a firmer locking and trigger system.[67] The cylindrical bone nut was almost universally used after the eleventh century for the catch of the crossbow. This development was tied, according to A. G. Credland, to the spread of the pole lathe at this time, which made it possible to produce precision crossbow nuts from bone.[68] This new manufacturing technique may have been the key technological breakthrough which led to the production of a more effective crossbow, but the increased use of this weapon, particularly in field warfare, is linked to tactical developments in the Latin West related to the use of the heavily-armored knight in mounted shock combat.

Until recently the crossbow was thought to have survived in the realms of

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[63] Tabarī, p. 204; Cahen, pp. 110, 132, 152, n. 12; Latham and Paterson, pp. 18–19; Paterson, pp. 35, 39.

[64] Richer, *Historia Francorum*, ed. and trans. Robert Latouche, in *Histoire de France 888–995*, 2 vols. (Paris: H. Champion, 1930–37), Vol. 1, p. 282 (*arcobalistis*), Vol. 2, p. 134 (*arcoballistae*).

[65] Blackmore, pp. 175–77; Harmuth, pp. 19–25; Anna Comnena, *Alexade: Règne de l'empereur Alexis I Comnène (1081–1118)*, ed. and trans. Bernard Leib, Collection byzantine publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé, Vol. 2 (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1943), pp. 217–18 (10.8).

[66] Blackmore, p. 177.

[67] Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Religion and Technology: Collected Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 266, 282. For a discussion and bibliography of the crossbow, see his *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 35, 111, 128, 151, 152, 164, 166, 167.

[68] Credland, "The Crossbow in Europe," p. 18.

Byzantium, referred to during the early and middle Byzantine periods as the σωληνάριον (*sōlēnarion*).[69] Nishimura has reinterpreted the term *sōlēnarion* as an arrow-guide but, in doing so, has rejected the possibility that another Greek term may have referred to a crossbow or to a similar type of hand-held bolt-projector.[70] He rejects the notion that the Greek prefix *cheiro-* (hand), when applied to bolt-projectors, indicates a hand-held weapon. He further contends that the Greek suffix *-bolistra* "was consistently and exclusively reserved for artillery." The studies which he cites to support this interpretation, rather than advocating his view, are clearly opposed to it.[71] The Greek term χειροβαλλιστρα (*cheiroballistra*), or "bow-*ballista*," refers to a hand-held bolt-projector (see below), but the only text of the middle Byzantine period to employ this word is the treatise *De administrando imperio*, written and compiled by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos between the years 948 and 952. Constantine VII uses the term in his account of Byzantine relations with the Chersonites during the reigns of Diocletian (284–305) and Constantine (307–37) and mentions that these machines were placed in and used from military wagons.[72] Because these machines were operated from wagons, Huuri has suggested that *cheiroballistra* is an incorrect transcription of the Latin term *carroballista*.[73] This appears to be the case and rules out the possibility that the term *cheiroballistra* was used during the middle Byzantine period to refer to a crossbow. The term τοξοβολιστρα or τοξοβαλιστρα (*toxobolistra* or *toxobalistra*), meaning "bow-*ballista*," may also be dismissed as being equated with the crossbow, because it is mentioned exclusively as being used on fixed defenses or on

[69] J. F. Haldon, "ΣΩΛHNAPION: The Byzantine Crossbow?" *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12 (1970), 155–57; G. T. Dennis, "Flies, Mice, and the Byzantine Crossbow," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1981), 1–5; Kolias, pp. 239–53.

[70] Nishimura.

[71] Nishimura states that, "the prefix *cheiro-* (hand) denoted a weapon operable by one man but heavy enough to require two men to carry and a rigid support to shoot, "and that the *cheiroballistra* (bow-*ballista*) "was still too large to be truly portable" (Nishimura, pp. 431–32). Both Baatz and Drachmann, who are cited by Nishimura with approval, consider the *cheiroballistra* to have been a portable weapon, requiring been no rigid support or stand, and which was operated by a single man who both spanned and discharged the weapon in a way similar to Heron's *gastraphetes* (A. G. Drachmann, rev. of *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* by E. W. Marsden in *Technology and Culture* 13 [July 1972], 493; Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 14). Landels also identifies the *cheiroballistra* as a "hand-catapult" and "a compact, portable arrow-shooter" (Landels, p. 130). The suffix *-bolistra* was not consistently and exclusively reserved for artillery. When it was used in conjunction with *cheiro-* (hand), it referred to a hand-held bolt-projector. The Greek term *cheiroballistra*, as Baatz has pointed out, is a translation of the Latin term *manuballista* (Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 14). If the Latin West was influencing Greek terminology for weaponry, there can be no truth to Nishimura's assertion that Byzantium saw the crossbow as a type of bow, whereas the Latin West saw it as a portable *ballista* (Nishimura, p. 432, n. 31).

[72] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, Engl. trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, rev. ed. (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), pp. 258 (53.30), 260 (53.34, 53.37), 264 (53.133).

[73] Huuri, p. 75, n. 3.

warships, indicating that it was most probably mounted on a stand.[74] The military equipment amassed for the unsuccessful expedition against Crete in 949 included both large and small *toxobolistrae*. These small machines may not have been crossbows, however, but rather small tension catapults mounted on stands.[75] Other weapons listed as being collected for this expedition include χειϱοτοξοβολιστϱων (*cheirotoxobolistrōn*) or "hand bow-*ballistae*."[76] These weapons are most likely crossbows. The prefix *cheiro-* indicates that they are hand-held, while *-toxobolistrōn* suggests that they are similar to tension catapults.

Anna Comnena's famous description of the crossbow as "a barbarian bow absolutely unknown to the Greeks" has led scholars to believe that the crossbow was introduced to Byzantium from the Latin West. The most plausible derivations of the two Byzantine terms for crossbow, τζάγγϱα (tzangra) and τζάϱχ (tzarch), which appear for the first time in the eleventh century, are from two Persian terms for crossbow, *zanbūrak* (little wasp) and *charkh* (pulley wheel), respectively. The former was a heavy military crossbow used in the defense and attack of strongpoints or employed aboard ships in naval warfare, which shot large bolts; while the latter was a light military crossbow, identical to the *qaws al-rijl* (foot-bow) and spanned by a cord and pulley spanning device attached to the archer's belt, from which it derived its name. If the Byzantine terms for crossbow come from Persian, there can be no question that the prototypes of medieval Byzantine crossbows are Islamic, rather than European, in origin. Although the Latin West did not introduce the crossbow to the East, it did make greater uses of it in battle, specifically in field warfare. Neither Byzantium nor the Islamic East emulated Europe in its extensive use of the crossbow, but in the Islamic West the crossbow was widely employed, imitating European military traditions.[77]

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[74] In his account of the measures taken by Anastasius II in preparation for the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717–18, Theophanes states that the Emperor restored the land and sea walls, and installed bolt-projecting tension catapults (τοξοβολιστϱας), trestle-frame traction trebuchets (τετϱαϱεας), and pole-frame traction trebuchets (μαγγανιχα) on the gates (Theophanes, *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Vol. 1 [Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883], p. 384 [A.D. 706]). Harry Turtledove has translated the terms used for the three machines cited by Theophanes above as "arrow-shooting engines, stone-throwing engines, and catapults" (Harry Turtledove, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982], p. 80). For other references to the use of the *toxobalistra* in the middle Byzantine period, see Theophanes continuatus, *De Basilio Macedone*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, Corpus Scriptorvm Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn: Weber, 1838), p. 298 (5.59); Leo VI, *Leonis imperatoris tactica*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Vol. 107 (Paris, 1863), col. 1008 (19.52); Constantine VII, *De ceremoniis*, ed. J. J. Reiske, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn: Weber, 1829), pp. 670–71, 673, 676 (2.45); Polyaenus, *Parecbolae*, in *Strategemata*, ed. J.-A. de Foucault (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1949), p. 112 (44.16); Huuri, pp. 72–75; 77, n. 4; 78, n. 3; 80, n. 2; 85–86; 88, n. 1.

[75] Constantine VII, pp. 670–71, 673. Dennis, p. 3.

[76] Constantine VII, pp. 669–70.

[77] Anna Comnena's identification of the crossbow as "a barbarian bow" (p. 217 [10.8.6]) has recently been reinterpreted by Nishimura as indicating an Islamic, rather than a western, origin for the weapon. He discredits the commonly accepted etymology of τζαγγϱα (*tzangra*) as being

The military technology and weaponry of other peoples greatly influenced Byzantine arms, and this fact makes it likely that the crossbow was used during the early and middle Byzantine periods by forces of the Byzantine Empire. Haldon has stressed that, "Byzantine arms and armour did not exist in a vacuum, but were related in every way to types prevalent outside the empire."[78] If the crossbow was used continuously in the Latin West from Roman times, as well as in the realms of Islam, it seems likely that the same was the case in the Byzantine Empire, even though its use may not have been widespread.

The *manuballista*, or "hand-bow," was considered by Marsden to be very similar to the machine having the equivalent title in Greek – the χειϱοβαλλισ-τϱα (*cheiroballistra*) or "hand-bow" – described by Heron.[79] Baatz has pointed out that the term *cheiroballistra* is clearly a translation of *manuballista*, which indicates that the two terms refer to the same machine.[80] Marsden reconstructed

derived from the medieval French term *cancre* or *chancre* (crab), since there is no evidence that crossbows were ever referred to by this word. In support of his argument, Nishimura cites Cahen's proposed derivation of *tzangra* and *tzarch* from the Persian term *charkh* (Arabic: *jarkh*). While there can be little doubt that *tzarch* was derived from *charkh*, the difference between *tzangra* and *charkh* is too great to suggest that they are related. It appears more likely that *tzangra* is a corruption of the Persian term *zanbūrak*. Joseph T. Reinaud, "De l'art militaire chez les Arabes au Moyen Âge," *Journal Asiatique*, 6th ser. 12 (September 1948), 211–13, was the first scholar to propose a correlation between *zanbūrak* and *tzangra*. For a discussion of the etymology of *tzangra* and *tzarch*, see Claude Cahen, "Les changements techniques militaires dans le Proche Orient médiéval et leur importance historique," in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, ed. V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 118, 123, 124; Huuri, pp. 71–79; Nishimura, pp. 433–34; Kolias, pp. 245–53. The *zanbūrak* was used by the crusaders in Saladin's siege of Tyre in 583/1187 ('Abd al-Rahmān b. Ismā'īl Abū Shāmah, *Kitāb al rawdatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*, Vol. 2 [Cairo: Matba'at Wādī al-Nīl, 1287–88/1871–72], p. 119; Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, Vol. 2 [Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1957], p. 244). A detailed description of the *zanbūrak* is found in the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church* in its account of Saladin's siege of Acre in 585/1189 (Sawīrus b. al-Muqaffa', *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, ed. and trans. Antoine Khater and O. H. E. Khs-Burmester, Vol. 3, part 2 [Cairo: Publications de la Société de'archéologie Copte, 1970], pp. 85–86 [Arabic text], 145). Reinaud's view that Muslim armies did not employ the *zanbūrak* until the middle of the thirteenth century is unsupported; Arabic sources indicate that crusader and Muslim armies both utilized this weapon during the late twelfth century. On this question, see especially Ibn al-Athīr's account of Saladin's siege of Sahyūn (584/1188) in which he mentions the full array of Muslim bow weapons used in siege operations of this time: the hand-bow, the *jarkh*, the *zanbūrak*, and the *ziyār*, a base-mounted tension catapult ('Izz al-Din 'Alī ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rīkh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg, Vol. 12 [Beirut: Dār Sādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1966], p. 11). Regarding the *qaws al-rijl* and the *charkh/jarkh*, these crossbows are essentially the same, but differ in the way that they are spanned. Al-Rammāh states that the *qaws al-rijl* corresponds to the *jarkh* (Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb al-Ahdab al-Rammāh, *Kitāb al-furūsīyah bi-rasm al-jihād*, MS 2825, fonds arabe, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, fol. 84v), and al-Tarsūsī notes that the *jarkh* is spanned by a pulley device (*lawlab latīf*), while the *qaws al-rijl* is spanned by a belt and claw spanning device (Cahen, pp. 110, 132). On these spanning systems, see Paterson, pp. 40–44.

[78] J. F. Haldon, "Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975), 45.

[79] Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 197. For Heron's description of the *cheiroballistra*, see Wescher, pp. 123–34; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 212–17.

[80] Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 14.

it as a two-armed, metal-framed torsion catapult having a winch mechanism and a stand.[81] A. G. Drachmann and Dietwulf Baatz have challenged Marsden's interpretation of Heron's *Cheiroballistra* on a number of grounds. First, Marsden's dating and attribution of Heron's *Cheiroballistra* have been called into question. Marsden attributed this work to Heron of Alexandria who wrote the *Belopoeica* probably during the second half of the first century A.D. On the basis of Schneider's research on the text, which demonstrated that different technical terms were used in the *Cheiroballistra* to refer to the same components mentioned in the *Belopoeica*, Drachmann has concluded that the text was not written by Heron, and Baatz has supported Schneider's earlier finding that the work is of late Roman or Byzantine date.[82] Second, Drachmann and Baatz have questioned some of the measurements Marsden has given for components of the machine and have reconstructed the *cheiroballistra* as a smaller and less power-ful weapon than Marsden had made it, one capable of being hand-held, as its name indicates, and drawn without a windlass. Marsden rejected the measure-ment of 1⅓ dactyls (2.46 cm.) given in the text for the diameter of the hole for the sinew bundle and increased the diameter to 2⅓ dactyls (4.31 cm.). Drachmann has accepted the original measurement. Marsden rejected the meas-urement of 10½ dactyls (19.4 cm.) given in the earliest manuscript of *Cheiro-ballistra* for the tension-frames of the machine, considering this dimension to be a corruption of 20 dactyls (37 cm.). Earlier studies of this treatise by C. Wescher and Rudolf Schneider have accepted the reading of 10½ dactyls. Baatz agrees with this reading and offers archeological evidence indicating that low but wide tension-frames were used on Roman bolt-projecting catapults produced during the Imperial period. One tension-frame excavated in a late Roman fort at Gornea in Romania measures 14.4 cm. in height.[83] Lastly, Drachmann and Baatz have pointed out that the *Cheiroballistra* describes a "crescent-shaped piece" fitted to the butt of the stock where the winch mechanism or windlass is mounted on larger catapults. The presence of this device indicates that the machine had no mechanical device at the end of the stock for pulling the bowstring back. Both Drachmann and Baatz have identified the "crescent-shaped piece" with the καταγωγις (*katagōgis*) of Heron's *gastraphetes*, utilized for the manual span-ning of the weapon.

The *cheiroballistra* or *manuballista* was a sort of "torsion-crossbow," accord-ing to Drachmann and Baatz, operated as its name indicates, by only one man.[84] It was a hand-held weapon, as its name suggests, but unlike the medieval crossbow, it could not be reloaded on horseback due to its spanning system. Its manual pull-back system required the archer to fit the crescent-shaped rest at the

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[81] Marsden, *Historical Development*, pp. 191, 197, and *Technical Treatises*, pp. 206–33. Hall, like Marsden, rejects the notion that the *manuballista* was a hand-held weapon (Hall, p. 531).

[82] Drachmann, pp. 492–93; Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 14; Rudolf Schneider, "Heron's *Cheiroballistra*," *Römische Mitteilungen* 21(1906), 167–68.

[83] Drachmann, p. 493; Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 15; Schneider, "Heron's *Cheiroballistra*" p. 154, n. 2; Wescher, p. 128.

[84] Drachmann, p. 493; Baatz, "Recent Finds," pp. 14–16.

rear of the stock to his stomach, and, by pushing against a stationary object, the slider, holding the bowstring in its claw-and-trigger device, was driven back to the rear of the stock and held in place by a linear ratchet. The *manuballista* shares many features with the *gastraphetes* (belly-bow), the earliest Greek catapult, but it could not have been introduced before the second half of the first century when the Romans first developed wide and low-set metal tension-frames for catapults. Vegetius and Anonymus are the only Roman authors to mention the *manuballista*.[85] Campbell has concluded that, "it seems probable that hand-held mechanical arms were used continuously from the third century B.C. through to the Byzantine period."[86] This is a reasonable deduction, but it is impossible to determine with certainty exactly what form these hand-held mechanical arms took. Since terminology can be quite fluid, a term which at one time referred to a hand-held, two-armed torsion bolt-projector may at a later period refer to a hand-held, tension-powered bolt- projector. With this in mind, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the *manuballista* mentioned by Anonymus may have been a tension-powered, rather than a torsion-powered, weapon. The two catapults described by Anonymus are tension-powered (see below), and so his *manuballista* may have been as well.

Vegetius is a difficult source to interpret. While most probably writing in the late fourth century, he utilized earlier sources, reflecting realities of the middle Republican or early imperial period, but he added information to suit the circumstances of his own day. Hence, his statements may contain information pertaining to any time period from the era of the middle Republic to the late Empire. Vegetius, for instance, mentions the *onager* – a piece of artillery which was not widely employed until the fourth century – as being used by the *antiqua legio* in defense of a camp. Baatz and Campbell contend that Vegetius, in this instance, has simply substituted "onager" – the only stone-projecting artillery piece of his day – for "ballista," utilized by his third-century source to refer to a two-armed, stone-projecting catapult.[87] Campbell is suspicious of artillery being used in Vegetius' day to defend a camp and concludes that "he is probably referring to the situation in the third (or even fourth) century."[88] Marsden noted that the ordinary legions in the fourth century possessed no artillery whatsoever.[89] If such conflation of the text occurs, it becomes very difficult to interpret Vegetius' description of artillery. Is his account of torsion artillery reflective of the middle Republican, Imperial, or late-Roman periods? Can his account of artillery be used as evidence to indicate the continued use of torsion artillery during the last century of the western empire? Given the conflated nature of the text and the existence of anachronistic information, Vegetius

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[85] Vegetius, 2.15, 3.14, 4.21, 4.22. Thompson, pp. 102, 119 (16.5); *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, pp. 15, 33 (16.5).

[86] Campbell, p. 132.

[87] Baatz, "Geschüzbewaffnung," p. 195; D. B. Campbell, "*Ballistaria* in the First to Mid-Third Century Britain: A Reappraisal," *Britannia* 15 (1984), 83.

[88] Campbell, "*Ballistaria*," p. 81.

[89] Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 195.

cannot be used exclusively as conclusive proof for the continued use of torsion artillery in late antiquity. What can be clarified is the terminology Vegetius uses to refer to artillery. The *onager* is his sole stone-projector, a one-armed sling machine with a massive torsion-spring mounted horizontally on a heavy base. Of the four bolt-projectors, the *ballista* is a large base-mounted, two-armed, metal-framed torsion catapult. The *carroballista* is a catapult mounted on a specially designed cart pulled by a team of horses or mules; it was clearly a two-armed, metal-framed torsion machine when it first appeared. The *manuballista* or "scorpion" is a hand-held bolt-projector used only by infantry; it was clearly a two-armed, metal-framed torsion machine when it was introduced. The *arcuballista* is a hand-held crossbow which could be utilized by mounted infantry and foot soldiers alike.

### B.   The *Ballista* of Ammianus Marcellinus
#### *Res gestae*, 23.4.1–3

(1) . . . et ballistae figura docebitur prima. (2) ferrum inter axiculos duo firmum compaginatur et uastum, in modum regulae maioris extentum, cuius ex uolumine tereti, quod in medio pars polita componit, quadratus eminet stilus extentius, recto canalis angusti meatu cauatus, et hac multiplici chorda neruorum tortilium illigatus. eique cochleae duo ligneae coniunguntur aptissime, quarum prope unam assistit artifex contemplabilis, et subtiliter apponit in temonis cauamine, sagittam ligneam spiculo maiore conglutinatam, hocque facto, hinc inde ualidi iuuenes uersant agiliter rotabilem flexum. (3) cum ad extremitatem neruorum acumen uenerit summum, percita interno pulsu a ballista ex oculis auolat, interdum nimio ardore scintillans, et euenit saepius, ut, antequam telum cernatur, dolor letale uulnus agnoscat.

(1) . . . the design of the *ballista* will be explained first. (2) The iron strut is fastened firmly between two cases [enclosing the sinew-bundles].[90] It is long and extends like a large ruler.[91] From the cylindrical case, which is polished in the middle,[92] a squared arm [*stilus*] projects outward, notched vertically with a

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[90] The "iron strut" (*ferrum*), as Marsden has correctly noted, is the bottom member of two parallel struts which hold the sinew-bundles of the two torsion-springs in place. The *axiculi* (literally, "two small axles") most probably refer to the cylindrical metal cases which enclose the tension-frames of the machine, as Marsden has suggested (*Technical Treatises*, p. 238). Brok has identified *ferrum* as the case of the stock of the machine (M. F. A. Brok, "Bombast oder Kunstfertigkeit," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 120 [1977], 340). The basic component of the catapult was the stock made up of a compound plank, consisting of a case which had a dovetail groove along its top which held a slider. This slider could move freely back and forth in the case, and, along the length of its upper surface, was a semi-circular groove in which the bolt was placed prior to being discharged.

[91] Marsden observed that the length of the bottom strut of this machine indicated that the tension-frames were set much further apart than they were in earlier catapults (*Technical Treatises*, p. 238).

[92] The phrase, *cuius ex uolumine tereti*, must refer to the metal cases which enclosed the tension-frames of the machine. These cylindrical metal cases protected the sinew-bundles from the weather, as well as from enemy counter-battery. Marsden has translated this phrase as, "from a well-finished joint in this, which a smoothed portion in the middle forms." He believed that this phrase referred to the four clamps which secured the stock to the bottom strut of the

narrow groove,[93] and here [at the nock of the arm] is tied a [bow]string of plaited sinews under tension.[94] To this two wooden pulley wheels are very tightly joined, and near one of them stands an artilleryman who aims the shot.[95] He carefully places on the groove of the slider a wooden bolt with a larger head firmly joined to it.[96] When this is done, strong young men on either side

machine (*Technical Treatises*, pp. 238–39). Brok believes that this phrase refers to the dovetail groove of the case in which the slider is placed (p. 341).

[93] The "squared arm" (*quadratus stilus*) is the arm inserted in each sinew-bundle of the machine. This arm projects outward from the cylindrical metal cases enclosing the tension-springs. In his description of the *onager*, Ammianus also uses the term *stilus* to refer to the arm thrust into the middle of the sinew-bundle of the machine (23.4.5–6). The end of the arm is "notched vertically with a narrow groove" so that the loop of the bowstring will fit onto it. Marsden suggested that *quadratus stilus* referred to the case of the stock, and that the nock for the bowstring (*recto canalis angusti meatu cavatus*) indicated the female dovetail of the stock (*Technical Treatises*, p. 239). Brok identifies the *stilus* as the slider of the machine (pp. 339–40, 345).

[94] Marsden translated *hac multiplici chorda neruorum tortilium illigatus* as, "bound in the complex cordage of twisted sinews" and suggested that this passage erroneously indicated that the stock of the machine was in direct contact with the sinew-bundles. Marsden also suggested that at this point in his description of the *ballista*, Ammianus may have confused his account of the machine with that of the *onager* which follows it (23.4.4–6), or that Ammianus did not write the phrase, *et hac . . . illigatus*, which may have been added to the text "as a result of a marginal note by a copyist struggling to clarify a most unhelpful description" (*Technical Treatises*, p. 239). The *multiplici chorda neruorum* does not refer to the sinew-bundles of the machine but to the bowstring which is composed of plaited sinews. Heron describes the plaiting of sinew bowstrings in his *Belopoeica* (Wescher, p. 110; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 38–39). The bowstring is directly affixed to the end of each of the machine's arms. Brok correctly equates *et hac . . . illigatus* with the machine's bowstring (pp. 340, 345).

[95] Marsden translated *cochleae duo ligneae* as "two wooden rollers" and believed that they referred to the "two bushes, one at each end of a single winch, in which the handspikes fit" (*Technical Treatises*, p. 239, n. 6). This interpretation, however, does not correspond to the text. Ammianus states that the "two wooden pulley wheels" are tightly joined to the bowstring and that an artilleryman is positioned near one of the pulley wheels to load the missile. Since the pull-back system of this catapult consists of "two wooden pulley wheels" which are tightly joined to the bowstring, this system must have been a windlass mechanism consisting of a winding drum and a pair of pulley wheels mounted on the rear of the stock which were connected by a system of cords to another pair of pulley wheels attached to a two-pronged claw-frame hooked over the bowstring. By turning the handspikes on the winding drum, the bowstring was pulled to the rear until it was gripped by the locking/trigger mechanism. A similar type of pulley system, using two opposing cranks with handles, was used on medieval crossbows (Payne-Gallwey, pp. 120–25; Harmuth, pp. 108–10). Vitruvius describes several mechanical means that were used to pull back the bowstring of a *ballista*, including a *polyspaston* or compound pulley (10.11.1), indicating that such devices were used. For another type of compound pulley pull-back system described in Heron's *Belopoeica*, see Wescher, pp. 84–85 and Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 25; 49, nn. 19 and 20; and 50, fig. 9.

[96] Ammianus does not intend to indicate that the artilleryman aims the catapult from the side of the machine, as one might possibly infer from the text. The operator of the machine, of course, must stand behind the catapult in order to aim it, as indicated in Heron's *Belopoeica* (Wescher, p. 86; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 26–27). Ammianus simply locates the "artilleryman who aims the shot" at the time he is loading the missile. This operation is done from the side of the machine after the bowstring has been gripped by the locking/trigger mechanism. Once the bolt has been placed on the groove of the slider, the operator pulls the trigger and the missile is discharged. Marsden correctly pointed out that the procedure for shooting described by Ammianus contradicts what Heron says on this subject, but he gave the sequence of actions

energetically wind back the windlass [*rotabilem*]. (3) When its point [i.e., the head of the bolt] has reached the end [of the path] of the bowstring, the bolt flies away out of sight driven by internal thrust, sometimes emitting sparks because of the excessive heat. And it often happens that before the missile is seen, the pain of a lethal wound is felt.

The two-armed, metal-framed torsion catapult described by Ammianus can be identified with an improved catapult design developed by the Romans during the second half of the first century. Machines of this type had wide, low tension-frames enclosed in cylindrical metal cases which protected the sinew-bundles from moisture and counter-battery fire from the enemy. Ammianus' description of this type of machine indicates that this form of advanced artillery was still being produced and utilized by Rome during the second half of the fourth century. This is confirmed by archeological evidence consisting of components from bolt-projecting torsion catapults, attributed to this same period, which have been found at three late Roman forts.[97] Marsden has described such bolt-projectors as "the finest pieces of arrow-shooting artillery ever produced by ancient catapult designers."[98]

### C. Artillery of Anonymus

**De rebus bellicis, ch. 7**

Espositio ballistae quadrirotis[99]

Exemplum ballistae cuius fabricam ante oculos positam subtilis pictura testatur. Subiecta namque rotarum quattuor facilitas, duobus subiunctis et armatis equis, ad usus hanc bellicos trahit, cuius tanta est utilitas pro artis industria ut omni latere in hostem sagittas impellat, sagittarii liberatem et manus imitata. Habet foramina per quattuor partes, quibus pro commoditate rerum circumducta et flexa, facillime ad omnes impetus parata consistat. Quae quidem a fronte cochleae machina et deponitur celerius et erigitur subleuata. Sed huius temo, in quamuis partem necessitas uocet, cita et facili conuersione deflexus erigitur. Sciendum est autem quod hoc ballistae genus duorum opera uirorum sagittas ex se, non ut aliae funibus, sed radiis intorta iaculatur.

specified by Heron in the wrong order. According to Marsden, Heron states that the procedure for shooting is as follows: "pulling back the slider (and, consequently, the bowstring and arms); loading the missile; aiming; pulling the trigger." Heron, however, adheres to the following order: pulling back the slider, aiming at the target, loading the missile, pulling the trigger (Wescher, pp. 89–90; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 26–27, 239–340, n. 7).

[97] Gudea and Baatz, pp. 50–72; Baatz, "Recent Finds," pp. 2, 9–17, pls. 2, 5, and "Eine Katapult-Spannbuchse aus Pityus," pp. 59–64.

[98] Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 231.

[99] See Thompson, pp. 61–65 (commentary), 97–98 (text), 114 (translation), and fig. III (manuscript illustration); *De rebus bellicis*. Part 1: *Aspects of the "De re bellicis"*; *De rebus bellicis*, Part 1, *Aspects of the "De rebus bellicis"*, p. 84 (analysis); *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, pp. 8–9 (text), 29 (translation), 102–03 (textual criticism), pls. V–VI (Manuscript illustrations); and Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 240–43.

Description of the Four-Wheeled *Ballista*

An unadorned picture gives evidence of an example of a *ballista*, the construction of which is placed before your eyes. An easily moving four-wheeled chassis, with two horses harnessed and armored, pulls it into battle. Its utility is such, due to its skillful design, that it is able to discharge bolts against the enemy on every side, imitating the free movement of an archer's hands. It has sockets in its four sides, and, as it is turned round, it can be pivoted by means of these as circumstances require, and so with great ease it is ready to meet all attacks.[100] By a universal-joint at the front it is quickly lowered and raised.[101] Thus, its stock can be turned round by a rapid and smooth revolution to face whatever direction is required and can then be elevated. It must be understood that this type of *ballista*, operated by two men, shoots bolts after [its bow] is spanned, not by ropes, as others are, but by a [spanning] lever.[102]

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[100] Neither Thompson nor Marsden understood the meaning or function of "sockets" (*foramina*). Thompson correctly referred to the *foramina* as "slots," but stated that their function and placement were difficult to decide. Marsden, quick to interpret these as components of a torsion machine, suggested that they referred to "the holes for the springs" of a torsion catapult, and misrepresented the text to suit his opinion by stating that: "Anonymus specifically mentions four *foramina*" (Thompson, pp. 63, 98, 114; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 241–42). Anonymus here refers to the pyramidal stand of the machine which has sockets on its four sides for the placement of an elevation device. This device, attached to the underbelly of the case, acts as a stabilizer for the stock when it is positioned at different angles. The reconstructions of the *ballista quadrirotis* by both Oliver and Hassall assume that the manuscript illustrations of the machine are to be interpreted literally (Revilo P. Oliver, "A Note on the *De rebus bellicis*," *Classical Philology* 50 [1955], 113–18; M. W. C. Hassall, "The Inventions," in *De rebus bellicis*, Part 1: *Aspects of the "De re bellicis*," p. 84). Any reconstructions based on these Heath Robinson-style illustrations are ludicrous and are not supported by any textual, pictorial, or archeological evidence.

[101] Thompson translates "universal-joint" (*cochleae machina*) as "screw," and Ireland renders it as a "screw-thread device." Marsden, however, identified it as the universal-joint of the machine, which allowed the catapult to be pointed in any direction (Thompson, pp. 62, 114; *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, p. 29; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 241–42). An elevating screw would not have allowed the turning of this machine to be achieved in both the horizontal and vertical planes as the text clearly indicates was possible.

[102] Unlike most bolt-projecting catapults which use a winch mechanism to bend the bow in order to bring it under sufficient tension for shooting, this *ballista* uses a spanning lever fixed to the stock to achieve the same result. This device may have been similar to the lever used on the Chinese repeating crossbow (Payne-Gallwey, pp. 237–42; Harmuth, pp. 149–52). A lever such as this would not have been as powerful as a windlass for bending the bow, but it would still have been quite strong and with two men operating it, by pulling on a transverse bar surmounting the two lateral arms of the lever, it would have enabled the machine to achieve a very rapid sequence of discharge. The plural of *radius* is used here to designate the spanning lever because this device had two arms which were hinged to the sides of the stock by a cross-pin. Another cross-pin intersected the two arms of the lever above its point of rotation and held a claw-frame. This device swung loosely on the cross-pin and hooked the bowstring at its center-point with its two lateral claws. As the two lever arms were rotated back, the bowstring was pulled to the rear until it was gripped by the locking/trigger mechanism, where it was held until the bolt was discharged. Vitruvius indicates in his account of artillery that several mechanical means were used to pull back the bowstring of a *ballista*: a lever (*vectis*), a windlass (*sucula*), a compound pulley (*polyspaston*), a capstan (*ergata*), and a system of drums (*tympani*) (Vitruvius, 10.11.1). Thompson translated the last sentence of the description of this *ballista* as: "It must further be recognized that this type of *ballista* is serviced by two men and fires arrows propelled, not by torsion, as in the case of other *ballistae*, but by a windlass" (Thompson, pp. 62–63, 114). Hassall has also suggested that *funes* refers to the torsion springs of the machine, while he identifies the

## *De rebus bellicis*, ch. 18

Expositio ballistae fulminalis[103]

(1) Huiusmodi ballistae genus murali defensioni necessarium supra ceteras impetu et viribus praevalere usu compertum est; arcu etenim ferreo supra canalem, quo sagitta exprimitur, erecto, validus nervi funis ferreo unco tractus eandem sagittam magnis viribus in hostem dimissus impellit. (2) Hunc tamen funem non manibus necque viribus militum trahi fabricae ipsius magnitudo permittit, sed retro duabus rotis viri singuli radiorum nisibus adnitentes funem retrorsum tendunt, pro difficultate rei viribus machinis adquisitis. (3) Ballistam tamen ipsam ad dirigenda seu altius seu humilius tela cochleae machina, prout vocet utilitas, nunc erigit nunc deponit. (4) Hoc tamen mirae virtutis argumentum, tot rerum diversitate connexum, unius tantum otiosi, ut ita dicam, hominis ad offerendam tantummodo impulsioni sagittam opera gubernat; videlicet ne si hominum turba huius ministerio inserviret, minueretur artis inventio. (5) Ex hac igitur ballista, tot et tantis ingenii artibus communita, expressum telum in tantum longius vadit, ut etiam Danubii, famosi pro magnitudine fluminis, latitudinem valeat penetrare; fulminalis etiam nuncupata appellatione sua virium testatur effectum.

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*radii* as "re-curve bow arms" (Hassall, p. 84). Oliver has pointed out that Thompson's translation of this passage is absurd, for no windlass or similar device can shoot a projectile (Oliver, pp. 113–14). Thompson's translation of *radii* as "windlass" and *funes* as "torsion" cannot be justified on lexicographical grounds. The word *radius* can refer to "a spoke" in a wheel, "a radial spike," "the radius of a circle," or "a rotating radial arm" (P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], p. 1571). Ireland's translation of this passage modifies Thompson's interpretation somewhat: "It must also be pointed out that this type of *ballista* fires its arrows on being wound up not by ropes, as others are, but by a windlass, which is worked by two men" (*De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, p. 29). Oliver has concluded that the text of Anonymus suffers from numerous lacunae and inserts several words in the passage which he believes were omitted by error: *hoc ballistae genus duorum opera uirorum sagittas ex se, non ut aliae funibus [nervinis], sed [ferrei arcus] radiis intorta iaculatur* (Oliver, p. 117). In this text *radii* most likely refers to the two arms of a spanning lever, and *funes* to the ropes for pulling back the slider of catapults having a conventional winch pull-back system or a pull-back apparatus using a compound pulley (*polyspaston*). Always eager to find evidence for torsion machines, Marsden translated this passage as: "It must be realized that, by the efforts of two men, this kind of *ballista* hurls its bolts, after being wound up not by ropes as other machines are, but by rods" (*Technical Treatises*, p. 241). He noted that the proper interpretation of this sentence hinged on the word *intorta*, which is translated as "being wound up" by both he and Ireland, and by Thompson as "propelled." The verb *intorqueo* can convey several types of action: 1) to bend back or bend around in a circle; 2) to turn or spin round; 3) to twist in a spiral; to make ropes by twisting; to wind round; 4) to twist round; to wrench; or 5) to hurl or launch a missile (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, pp. 952–53). Since its primary meaning is to bend something back, *intorta* is used in this case to refer to the spanning or bending of the tension-bow as the lever draws the bowstring back to the catch to ready the machine for discharge. Marsden suggested that "lever" (*radiis*) referred to toothed iron bars attached to the rear of the slider which pulled the slider back by means of a cog-wheel fitted on a winch (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 243). Marsden's ingenuity is admirable, but his interpretation exceeds the information provided in the text.

[103] See Thompson, pp. 61–65 (commentary), 102–03 (text), 120 (translation), and fig. XII (manuscript illustration); *De rebus bellicis*, Part 1: *Aspects of the "De rebus bellicis,"*, pp. 80–84 (analysis); *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, pp. 17 (text), 34–35 (translation), pls. XII–XIII (manuscript illustrations); and Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 244–46.

Description of the "Thunderbolt" *Ballista*

(1) This type of *ballista*, essential for the defence of walls, has been found by experience to be superior to all others in range and power. When a steel bow has been placed in position above the groove from which the bolt is discharged,[104] a strong sinew-rope [i.e., the bowstring] is pulled back by an iron drawing-claw, and, when released, it shoots the bolt with great force at the enemy.[105] (2) The size of the machine does not allow this bowstring to be drawn back by the manual efforts of soldiers [alone]; instead, two men pull the bowstring back by pressing backwards on the handspikes of the two wheels [of the winch], mechanized force having been acquired by the machine commensurate with the difficulty of the operation. (3) A universal-joint alternately raises and lowers the *ballista* itself, so that it may discharge its missiles higher or lower, as needed.[106] (4) Proof of its amazing capability is evidenced by the fact that, although it is constructed of so many component parts, it is operated – so far as the shooting of the bolt is concerned – by one man, at his leisure, so to speak. For the ingenuity of the invention would be diminished if a throng of men were to operate it. A missile shot from this *ballista*, which has so many extraordinary features, can travel so much farther [than that shot from any other machine] that

[104] Marsden advanced the view that the "steel bow" (*arcus ferreus*) does not refer to a bow, but was equivalent to the *kamarion* (καμαριον) or "little arch" of Heron's *cheiroballistra*. To keep the cylindrical frames containing the cord-bundles of a two-armed torsion machine in place, two horizontal iron struts were required: a lower strut fixed to the stock of the machine and a upper strut (*kamarion*) which had a small arch in the middle to assist the operator in seeing his target and aiming the machine (Wescher, p. 130; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, pp. 207, 214, 215, 223–26, 236, 245–47). This interpretation of "steel bow" is suspect. This non-technical description of a bolt-projector employs the term "bow" in the context of describing the drawing of the bowstring and the shooting of the bolt. Heron's "little arch" has nothing to do with these actions. Although the catapults on Trajan's Column prominently depict the *kamarion*, showing it larger than it actually is, this does not indicate that the *kamarion* is a preeminent component of the catapult, merely that it is an important feature of the iconography of the catapult. The *kamarion* is not one of the most conspicuous or important components of a catapult. The most significant parts of a torsion machine are its stock and sinew-bundles, while the stock and bow are the most important parts of a tension-powered machine. Hence, in descriptions of catapults, particularly non-technical descriptions which concentrate on major components of the machine, one would not expect the *kamarion* to receive much attention, and certainly not major attention, as it would if the *arcus ferreus* is interpreted here as the *kamarion*. Marsden suggested that "the groove" (*canalis*) is used here to refer to the whole stock. It seems more probable that it indicates the groove for the missile running the length of the upper surface of the slider (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 245). The reconstructions of the "Thunderbolt" *ballista* by Oliver and Hassall are not to be followed since they uncritically accept the manuscript illustrations of the machine which make no mechanical sense whatsoever (Oliver, pp. 113–18; Hassall, pp. 80–84). Ireland has the "steel bow" mounted "vertically above the channel along which the arrow is propelled," indicating that he, too, is interpreting the text according to the manuscript illustrations (*De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, p. 34).

[105] Marsden correctly identified the "strong sinew-rope" (*validus nervi funis*) as the bowstring of the machine. The "drawing-claw" *ferreus uncus*), or literally, "an ironhook" or "clamp," is interpreted by Marsden to refer to "a simple hook connecting the end of the winch-rope to the rear of the slider or a vague description of the trigger-mechanism" (*Technical Treatises*, p. 245). Since the text indicates that this device pulls the bowstring back, it must be a drawing-claw, not a hook at the end of the winch-rope or a trigger-mechanism.

[106] As Marsden has pointed out, *cochleae machina* can best be interpreted as a universal joint, not a "screw" or "screw-thread device," as Thompson and Ireland have translated the term respectively (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 245; Thompson, p. 120; *De rebus bellicis*, Part 2, p. 34).

it can even fly across the width of the Danube, a river famous for its size. Called the "Thunderbolt" *ballista*, it is so designated for the effectiveness of its power.

Virtually all attempts to reconstruct these two catapults have relied to a greater or lesser extent on the manuscript illustrations of the machines, the earliest of which date from the fifteenth century.[107] These illustrations cannot be used as evidence for reconstructing these machines because they are mechanically preposterous and are not corroborated by any other descriptions of catapults or extant artistic representations of ancient artillery (figs. 9–10).[108] Marsden was correct to reconstruct the artillery of Anonymus as conventional bolt- projecting catapults, but wrong to consider them two-armed torsion machines. He is alone in this interpretation. Oliver's analysis of the machines, while misguided on many points, makes a reasonable deduction regarding the similar construction and operating features of both pieces of artillery. He states that, "it is quite clear that both machines operate on the same principle, and differ only to the extent made necessary by the desire to attain maximum mobility in the one, and maximum destructive energy in the other."[109] The tension-power of a steel bow provides the propulsive force for the "Thunderbolt" *ballista*, as the text

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[107] In addition to the studies cited above on *De rebus bellicis*, see Rudolf Schneider, *Anonymi de rebus bellicis liber* (Berlin: Weidmannische Buchhandlung, 1908), "Vom Büchlein *De rebus bellicis*," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 25 (1910), 327–42; Salomon Reinach, "Un homme d'idées au Bas-Empire," *Revue archéologique*, sér. v, 16 (1922), 205–65. Schneider believed *De rebus bellicis* to be a fifteenth-century forgery, since he could not accept the possibility that a Roman author would have advocated using a tension-bow, rather than torsion springs, on a catapult. Schramm had no difficulty with this idea and suggested that the "Thunderbolt" *ballista* took the form of his *Übergangsgeschütz* which had a steel bow (Schramm, *Antiken Geschütze*, pp. 49–50). Thompson, while making a honest effort at translation, makes no serious attempt to reconstruct the catapults described by Anonymus, stating that, "all attempts to explain these machines should start from the assumption that in practice they would not have worked at all" (Thompson, p. 64). On the illustrations of *De rebus bellicis*, see J. J. G. Alexander, "The Illustrations of the Anonymus, *De rebus bellicis*," in *De rebus-bellicis*, Part 1: *Aspects of the "De re bellicis,"* pp. 11–15.

[108] According to the latest study of these illustrations, they were all transmitted via a single Carolingian intermediary (the *codex Spirensis*), dating from the late ninth or early tenth century, of which only a single, unillustrated, bifolium remains (Alexander, pp. 11–15). Since neither the original fourth-century illustrations of Anonymus are extant, nor the illustrations from the Carolingian copy, there is no way of telling whether or not the Renaissance illustrations of the catapults of Anonymus are based on the original Roman ones. Hence, there are two possible overlays of interpretation – Carolingian and Renaissance – with no assurance that either interpretation follows the Roman original. These illustrations are not only corrupt, they bear no resemblance to any classical depiction or medieval copy of a Greek or Roman illustration of a catapult. The Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines certainly knew how to depict machines that looked like catapults and so did the artists of the Renaissance. So why do the catapults of Anonymus not look like catapults? The Carolingian monk who produced the illustrations may either have (a) made them without the benefit of the Roman originals, or (b) chose not to follow the Roman originals. Surviving illustrations of ancient catapults appear very confusing to the untrained eye. If the Carolingian monk had the original Roman illustrations, he may have found them bewildering, and, rather than attempting to reproduce what he believed to be unintelligible illustrations, he decided to create ones which he thought made better sense of the text than the Roman illustrations.

[109] Oliver, p. 113.

clearly indicates. The description of the "Four-Wheeled" *ballista* does not explicitly indicate the manner of propulsive force utilized, but the past participle *intorta* (bent back) suggests that a tension-bow, rather than torsion springs, provides the motive power for the machine.[110] If the two machines were powered differently, Anonymus would most likely have indicated this essential fact in his accounts of these bolt-projectors. The "Four-Wheeled" *ballista* was probably fitted with a composite, rather than a steel, bow to enhance its mobility as a piece of field artillery.

Marsden rejected the conclusion that the "Thunderbolt" *ballista* obtained its propulsive force from a steel bow, because he believed that the ancients could not manufacture resilient steel in sufficient quantity to produce steel tension-bows for catapults.[111] If the Romans could produce high grade steel for swords and cutting tools, they possessed the technological expertise to manufacture high quality steel for the tension-bows for catapults. The fact that many surviving metal objects of Roman origin have thin steel layers or thin steel sheets welded on to them does not indicate that objects made entirely of steel were not produced, merely that steel was very expensive to make. Steel bows may never appear in the archeological record because (a) they represent a transient technology and were not produced in large quantity, and because (b) any surviving steel object would have been reused, made into objects having thin steel layers or thin steel sheets welded on to them.[112] Steel bows would have been expensive and heavy, but perfect for use on fixed defenses where space was limited, just as it is recommended for use here. Payne-Gallwey has described a heavy crossbow with a steel bow which was made in Geneva during the fifteenth-century. According to him, this weapon, weighing 18 lbs., was a "formidable siege crossbow . . . which was only employed in the attack or defence of a fortress, though it could be supported and aimed by a man of very strong physique, [and] was usually discharged either as it rested on a parapet, or when pivoted on a small tripod."[113] The steel bow of this crossbow measured 3 ft. 2 in. in length, and at its center it was 2½ in. wide and 1 in. thick. To draw the bowstring a distance of 7 in. to the catch of the lock required a drawing force of 1,200 lb. This was accomplished by the aid of a small portable fifteenth-century windlass, which, Payne-Gallwey observed, accomplished its task with ease by using the fingers of only one hand to draw it. The immense force required to draw the

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[110] Marsden translated *intorta* both as "wound up" and "twisted up" and expanded his translation of the passage, *hoc ballistae genus duorum opera uirorum sagittas ex se, non ut aliae funibus, sed radiis intorta iaculatur*, to read: "this kind of *ballista* hurls its arrows from itself after it has had its springs twisted up not by ropes as other machines are, but by rods." This interpretation leads Marsden to conclude that the "Four-Wheeled" *ballista* "is plainly subjected to some sort of torsion and is definitely, therefore, a torsion engine" (*Technical Treatises*, pp. 241, 243).

[111] Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 235, n. 4.

[112] On the production of high quality steel in the Roman Empire, see, K. D. White, *Greek and Roman Technology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 10, 126, 136, 250.

[113] Payne-Gallwey, pp. 14–15. I would like to thank Vernard L. Foley for alerting me to this description.

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bowstring meant that the bowstring had to be strong, just as Anonymus recommends in his text. Like Anonymus, Payne-Gallwey could not resist the challenge of shooting bolts from this crossbow across a body of water to test the range of the machine. He shot several bolts across the Menai Straits, and the Ordnance Survey recorded the distance reached by the bolts to be between 440 and 450 yards (402.3–411.5 m.).

Marsden has remarked that during the fourth century "there seems to have been a special category of artillery designed particularly for the defence of walls and termed generally *tomenta muralia*."[114] If so, the account of the "Thunderbolt" *ballista* by Anonymus is the only description there is of Roman artillery specifically designed for the defense of fortified structures. Although the description of this catapult indicates that it has been tested in practice and "has been found by experience to be superior to all others in range and power," it cannot be determined whether this piece of artillery ever came into general use.[115] The tower-mounted *ballistae* described by Procopius most likely utilized a composite bow, which suggests that even if steel-bow tension catapults were employed on more than a limited scale in fortified structures of the Roman Empire, they were soon replaced by more cost effective composite-bow bolt-projectors.

### D. Procopius' *Ballista*
#### *De Bello Gothico*, 1.21.14–18

(14) βελισάριος δὲ μηχανὰς μὲν ἐς τοὺς πύργους ἐτίθετο, ἃς καλοῦσι βαλλίστρας. τόξου δὲ σχῆμα ἔχουσιν αἱ μηχαναὶ αὗται ἔνερθέν τε αὐτοῦ κοίλη τις ξυλίνη κεραία προὔχει, αὐτὴ μὲν χαλαρὰ ἠρτημένη, σιδηρᾷ δὲ εὐθείᾳ τινὶ ἐπικειμένη. (15) ἐπειδὰν οὖν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐνθένδε βάλλειν ἐθέλουσιν ἄνθρωποι, βρόχου βραχέος ἐνέρσει τὰ ξύλα ἐς ἄλληλα νεύειν ποιοῦσιν, ἃ δὴ τοῦ τόξου ἄκρα ξυμβαίνει εἶναι, τόν τε ἄτρακτον ἐν τῇ κοίλῃ κεραίᾳ τίθενται, τῶν ἄλλων βελῶν, ἅπερ ἐκ τῶν τόξων ἀφιᾶσι, μῆκος μὲν ἔχοντα ἥμισυ μάλιστα, εὖρος δὲ κατὰ τετραπλάσιον. (16) πτεροῖς μέντοι οὐ τοῖς εἰωθόσιν ἐνέχεται, ἀλλὰ ξύλα λεπτὰ ἐς τῶν πτερῶν τὴν χώραν ἐνείροντες ὅλον ἀπομιμοῦνται τοῦ βέλους τὸ σχῆμα, μεγάλην αὐτῷ λίαν καὶ τοῦ πάχους κατὰ λόγον τὴν ἀκίδα ἐμβάλλοντες. (17) σφίγγουσί τε <σθένει> πολλῷ οἱ ἀμφοτέρωθεν μηχαναῖς τισι, καὶ τότε ἡ κοίλη κεραία προϊοῦσα {ἐκπίπτει} μὲν, ξὺν ῥύμῃ δὲ τοσαύτῃ ἐκπίπτει τὸ βέλος ὥστε ἐξικνεῖται μὲν οὐχ ἧσσον ἢ κατὰ δύο τῆς τοξείας βολάς, δένδρου δὲ ἢ λίθου ἐπιτυχὸν τέμνει ῥαδίως. (18) τοιαύτη μὲν ἡ μηχανή ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου, ὅτι δὴ βάλλει ὡς μάλιστα, ἐπικληθεῖσα.

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[114] Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 197, and *Technical Treatises*, p. 245, n. 1; Ammianus, 17.1.12, 18.9.1. Campbell adds that, "the new strategy of actively defending fortifications is a phenomenon of the later third century; the thickening of fort walls and the elaboration of outer defences indicate a trend toward resisting direct attack, instead of the garrison issuing out to meet the attacker" (Campbell, "Ballistaria," pp. 81–82). Thus, one should expect to find the widespread deployment of artillery in Roman fortifications only after the third century.

[115] Thompson discredits the claim of Anonymus that the "Thunderbolt" *ballista* was ever built or tested, stating that, "it is exceeding difficult to believe that this ballista had ever in fact been made and used, and still more difficult to believe that it had been found efficient" (p. 77).

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(14) Belisarius placed on the towers siege machines which they call *ballistae*. These siege machines take the shape of a bow;[116] but underneath it a grooved wooden slider projects; this is so fitted that it can move freely and it rests in a straight iron-[plated] case.[117] (15) Whenever men want to shoot at the enemy with this, they make the two wooden ears[118] which form the extremities of the bow bend toward each other by means of the loop [of the bowstring] fastened to them, and they place the bolt in the grooved slider;[119] the bolt is about half the length of ordinary missiles which they shoot from hand-bows, but about four times as thick. (16) However, it does not have the usual fletching, but by inserting thin strips of wood in place of the fletching, they give it the general form of an ordinary arrow; they make the bolt-head very large in proportion to its thickness (fig. 8). (17) Men who stand on either side wind it up tight by means of certain devices,[120] and then the grooved slider discharging shoots[121] the bolt

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[116] Marsden translates this passage as, "these machines have a component in the shape of a bow." He argued that "the shape of a bow" (τόξου δὲ σχῆμα) corresponds to the "little arch" (καμάριον) of the *cheiroballistra* described by Heron (Wescher, p. 130; Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 247, n. 1). Procopius does not indicate that the *ballistae* have "a component in the shape of a bow," but rather that the main structural feature of these machines is a bow, clearly indicating that they are tension catapults. It is unlikely that the "bow" indicates the upper horizontal strut of the machine, and it is quite improbable that Procopius would begin his description of these siege engines by focusing on this minor detail of the machines.

[117] Marsden translated "grooved wooden slider" (κοίλῃ κεραία) as "hollow wooden beam" and suggested that this term referred to the stock of the machine. According to him, "Procopius would appear not to have had a very clear idea of [the stock] himself, but probably meant these words to give a brief general impression of all a stock's components which are fully described by Heron." Marsden failed to see that Procopius provides a rather detailed description of the stock. He describes both the slider and the case and indicates that the slider was grooved for the placement of the missile and that the case was iron, or rather, plated with sheet iron, rather than being made of solid iron. Having a sheet metal running course for the slider would reduce the friction coefficient between the case and the slider. Thinking that "the grooved wooden slider" refers to the entire stock, Marsden interpreted the text to indicate that the stock "could move freely [because it was] connected to the universal-joint which Procopius does not specifically mention." Marsden translated "a straight iron-[plated] case" (σιδηρᾷ δὲ εὐθείᾳ) as the "straight iron beam" and suggested that it referred to the horizontal metal beam which kept the cylindrical frames containing the cord-bundles of this two-armed torsion machine in place, rather than to the case of the stock (*Technical Treatises*, pp. 246–47).

[118] The "two wooden ears" (τὰ ξύλα) literally refer to "two wooden parts" which form the extremities of the bow. Since these parts are distinct enough to be identified as separate from the rest of the bow, Vernard L. Foley has suggested to me that they may be the "ears" of the bow, which in archery nomenclature refer to the curved-like tips of a Oriental bow containing the nock. Believing that the machine was a torsion engine, Marsden translated the "two wooden ears" at the ends of the bow as "wooden beams," which he thought referred to the two arms of a torsion catapult. Unable to explain why the τὰ ξύλα were clearly indicated as being at the ends of the bow, Marsden concluded that, "Procopius seems here to be doing his best to explain that the arms of his torsion engine operate in a manner similar to the ends of an ordinary hand-bow" (*Technical Treatises*, p. 247). The most plausible explanation for this is that Procopius is, indeed, trying to indicate that this machine operates in a manner similar to an ordinary hand-bow because, as a tension catapult, it is similar to an ordinary hand-bow.

[119] The "loop" of the bowstring (βρόχου βραχέος) was translated by Marsden as "short noose" which, according to him, referred to the bowstring of the machine.

[120] Marsden correctly suggested that "certain devices" must refer to a winch-mechanism (*Technical Treatises*, pp. 247–48). In this case the device used was probably a circular ratchet placed at the rear of the stock.

[121] This passage twice employs the verb ἐκπίπτει. Since Procopius is not likely to have done

with such force that it reaches a distance of not less than two bow-shots;[122] and
when it hits a tree or a stone, it pierces it easily. (18) Such is the siege machine
which bears this name, so designated because it shoots with great force.

Marsden's claim that Procopius' catapult is a two-armed torsion bolt-projector
is not supported by the evidence provided in the description of this machine.
This piece of artillery appears to be a base-mounted tension catapult having a
composite bow of Oriental design. Procopius singles out two components of the
bow which he identifies as τὰ ξύλα (*ta xyla*), or "wooden parts," forming the
ends of the bow. Since these parts must be distinct enough from the rest of the
bow to be identified separately, this bow is not likely to be an ordinary self bow,
but rather a reflexed Oriental composite bow fitted with rigid curved end-pieces
made of wood. These end-pieces are known as "ears" and can be seen on a
number of illustrations of ancient Greek catapults.[123] The catapult described by
Procopius is most probably identical to the base-mounted, bolt-projecting

this, the double ἐκπίπτει may be assumed to have been inscribed by error. Editorial efforts to
amend this passage have considered the first ἐκπίπτει to be a incorrect transcription of some
other verb. Dewing suggested that the first ἐκπίπτει be read as ἐκλείπει, which he translates as
"stops." Hence, his rendition of the passage reads: "and then the grooved shaft shoots forward
and stops, but the missile is discharged from the shaft" (Procopius, *Works*, pp. 204–05). This
implies that some part of the stock, presumably the slider, moves forward upon the release of the
bowstring and then stops, but the missile continues on its course being discharged from the
slider. Marsden followed Dewing's suggested reading in his translation of this passage but
offered an alternative reading of ἐκπαύεται for ἐκπίπτει (Marsden, *Technical Treatises*, p. 248,
n. 10). Eric McGeer has suggested to me an alternative amendment that does not require the
substitution of another verb for ἐκπίπτει. The sentence may be read with only one ἐκπίπτει and
still make perfect sense. The main verb of this sentence is ἐκπίπτει and is used with the active
participle προϊοῦσα to describe the action of the slider as it simultaneously discharges the
missile down its grooved channel – just as a gun discharges a bullet through its barrel – and
ejects or expels the bolt out of this channel. Ἐκπίπτει is a transitive verb in the present tense,
having βέλος as its direct object. This solution to the double ἐκπίπτει requires less textual
amendment than the substitution of one verb for another, and I am indebted to Dr. McGeer for
kindly suggesting this elegant solution.

[122] Marsden considered the text to be corrupt at this point because he believed that, "Pro-
copius thought that some part of the stock travelled forward when the trigger was released, and
then stopped, allowing the missile to continue on its course." Marsden was right to indicate that
neither the slider, nor any other portion of the stock, moves when the trigger is pulled, but wrong
to suggest that the text indicates that the slider is driven forward by the bowstring upon release
of the trigger. Procopius merely indicates that the slider serves to discharge the missile and eject
it towards its target. Marsden's assessment that "Procopius' erroneous conception of the *bal-
lista*'s action inevitably reduces our confidence in the rest of his account" is not substantiated
(*Technical Treatises*, p. 248, n. 10).

[123] Wescher, p. 48, figs. 13–14, p. 51, fig. 15, p. 52, fig. 16, p. 64, fig. 20, p. 67, fig. 21, p. 80,
figs. 22–23, p. 90, fig. 26; Aage G. Drachmann, "Biton and the Development of the Catapult,"
*Prismata, Naturwissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studien, Festschrift für Willy Hartner*, ed. Y.
Maeyama and W. G. Saltzer (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), pp. 119–31, figs. 1–4, 6. Such ears are
also visible on the arms of the two-armed, bolt-projecting torsion catapult depicted on a stone
relief executed at Pergamum in the reign of Eumenes II (197–160/59 B.C.). The sculptor,
however, has incorrectly represented the straight arms of a torsion catapult as being similar to
the bow of a tension catapult. Marsden has interpreted this relief as evidence for the use of
curved arms on torsion catapults, similar to those described by Vitruvius on his bolt-projecting
catapult (*Technical Treatises*, pp. 7, 188–89, 230, 270, pl. 3, diagram 10).

tension catapult referred to in texts of the middle Byzantine period as the τοξοβολιστρα (*toxobolistra*) or "bow-*ballista*."[124]

## IV. Conclusion

Textual accounts (Vegetius and Ammianus) and archeological finds of catapults indicate that Rome continued to use the two-armed torsion catapult through the second half of the fourth century. It is also clear from Anonymus' description of artillery that tension catapults were being put to wider use in the fourth century. The employment of the *onager* in this same century as Rome's sole stone-projecting ordnance suggests that simple, less sophisticated machines were viewed as preferable to advanced, yet complex, ones. Special mathematical and technical skills were required to construct and maintain a two-armed torsion catapult, and these skills appear to have been in decline in both the eastern and western portions of the Roman Empire from the fourth century onward. The two-armed torsion catapult demanded frequent attention to keep the springs in balance, and its sinew-ropes were subject to breakage, rotting, and changes in tension due to moisture and stretching. The tension catapult, while requiring skill to make, was less costly and far easier to operate and maintain. It was less powerful than the torsion catapult, but more reliable. Once the two-armed torsion catapult was retired as a stone-projector and used only as a bolt-projector, the advantages of having such a sophisticated machine to launch missiles of relatively light weight were soon outweighed by the machine's obvious disadvantages: its high production costs, complexity of operation, and frequent maintenance. The tension catapult, while unable to match the high performance of the two-armed torsion catapult, more than made up for this deficit by its lower cost of production, ease of operation, and reliability. The combination of these factors with the economic and political decline of the Roman Empire in late antiquity resulted in the abandonment of the two-armed torsion catapult and its replacement by the tension catapult.

Although there is little likelihood that the two-armed torsion catapult survived in the western Empire beyond the collapse of the western Roman army during the fifth century, scholarly opinion is divided on whether it survived in the eastern Empire, where the Roman army remained intact. Baatz concludes his discussion of recent finds of ancient artillery by stating that the new type of catapults developed by the Romans, having low but wide tension-frames, instead of the narrow and high tension-frames of Greek torsion artillery, "lasted for centuries into the Byzantine period."[125] There is no direct evidence for this. The fact that Heron's treatise on artillery, with the section on the *cheiroballistra* added to it, continued to be copied throughout the middle Byzantine period may simply indicate a conservative archaistic literary tradition, rather than evidence

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[124] See n. 74 above and text.
[125] Baatz, "Recent Finds," p. 16.

for the continued use of torsion artillery. In the sixth century the only bolt-projector identified by Procopius is the tension catapult, which suggests that the two-armed torsion catapult was most likely phased out before this. His designation of this machine by the Greek form of the Latin word *ballista*, rather than by one of the classical Greek words for a torsion catapult which were familiar to him, indicates a change in Greek nomenclature for artillery which reflects a change in the form of artillery used: the tension, rather than the torsion, catapult.[126] The *Strategikon* of Maurice, dating from the early seventh century, also exhibits this change in nomenclature for the catapult, indicating that Procopius' use of the term *ballistra* does not reflect an individual or regional idiosyncrasy, but a genuine transition in terminology which mirrors a change in the form of artillery.[127] In Byzantine sources dating from the eighth to the eleventh century, the term τοξοβολιστρα (*toxobolistra*), or "bow-*ballista*," is used, giving clear indication of the transition from the torsion to the tension catapult. The absence of any term in post-Procopian Byzantine sources that refers to torsion artillery suggests that the production of the two-armed torsion catapult came to an end sometime prior to the siege of Rome by the Goths in 537–38, most likely during the fifth century.[128] The *onager*, the one-armed torsion machine of late antiquity, did survive into the sixth century, as we know from Procopius' mention of it at the siege of Rome by the Goths,[129] but its days were numbered. By the end of the sixth century a new stone-projector, the traction trebuchet, had appeared in the Mediterranean. This machine was not only far simpler to construct, operate, and maintain than the artillery of classical antiquity, it was considerably more powerful. The triumph of this new machine and the final end of torsion artillery must be left to another study.[130]

[126] The Greek term for the two-armed bolt-projecting torsion catapult was καταπέλτης ὀξυ βελής or either of these words used alone. The earliest term used for this type of artillery, however, was καταπάλτης ὀξυβόλος (Marsden, *Historical Development*, p. 1, n. 1).

[127] See βαλλίστρα and its compounds in George T. Dennis and Ernst Gamillscheg, eds. *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 17 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 12.B.6.9, p. 422; 12.B.18.9, p. 456; 12.B.21.13, p. 468; 12.B.21.43, p. 470. Since Maurice mentions that the βαλλίστρα was mounted on wagons (12.B.6.9, 12.B.18.9) – like the *carroballista* – there is little doubt that it was a bolt-projector.

[128] This statement requires substantiation far beyond what can be provided in a note. See my forthcoming article "The Terminology of Medieval Artillery," which deals with this subject.

[129] Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, 1.21.19.

[130] My thanks are due to Donald J. Kagay and Theresa M. Vann for assisting me with the translation of the Latin texts presented in this paper and to Eric McGeer for his aid with the Greek text of Procopius. Vernard L. Foley provided me with many helpful suggestions pertaining to technical matters which are graciously acknowledged. I am grateful to Dietwulf Baatz, George T. Dennis, S. J., and Lawrence A. Tritle, who read an earlier draft of this paper, for their discussion and criticism. Full responsibility for the content and conclusion drawn here rests with the author alone.
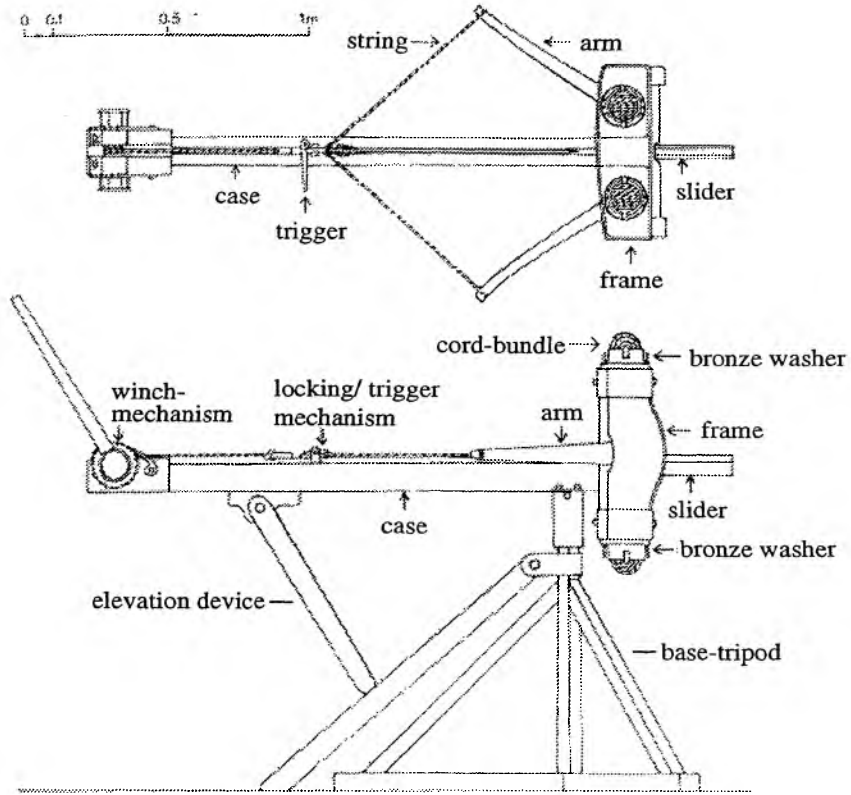
Figure 1. Two-armed, wooden-frame, bolt-projecting catapult of Vitruvius (reconstruction after E. Schramm).
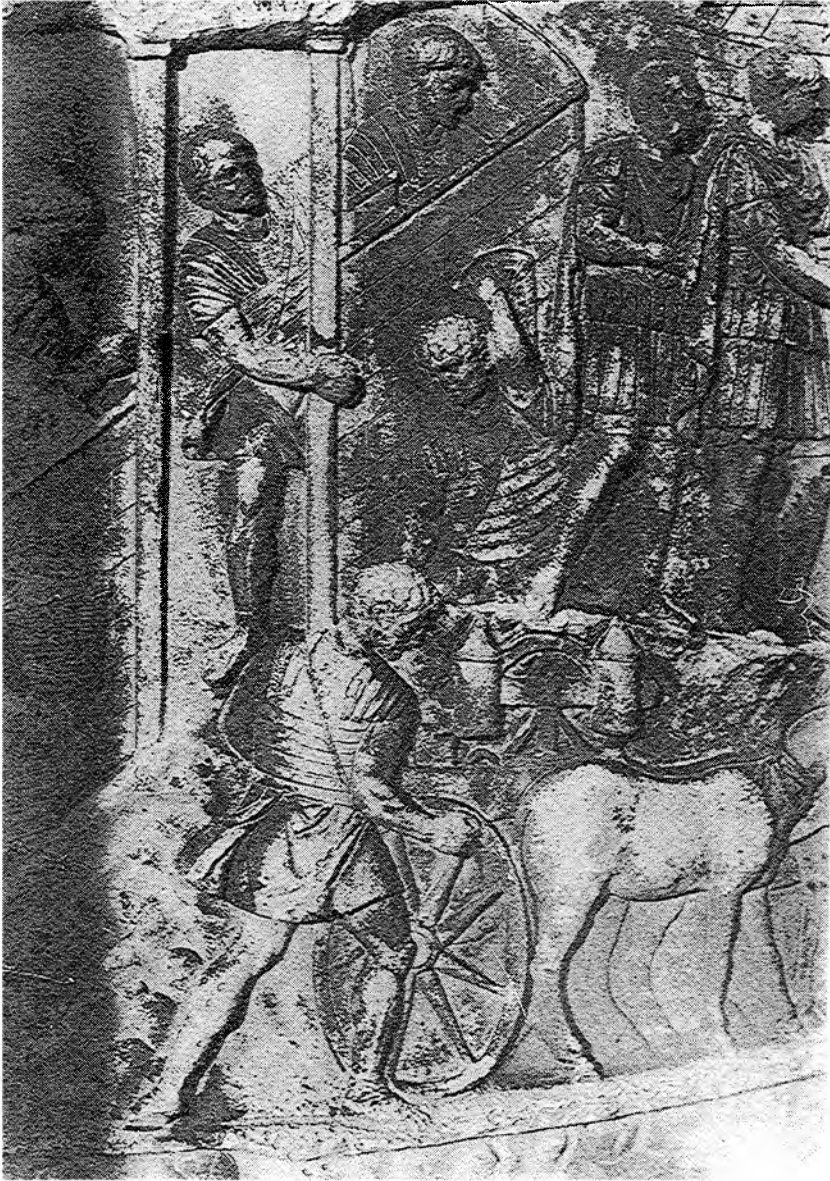
Figure 2.  Roman two-armed, metal-frame, bolt-projecting torsion catapult being hauled up a mountain track on a mule-drawn transport-wagon. Trajan's column, A.D. 113. Deutsches Archäeologisches Institut – Rom.

Figure 3. Two catapults mounted on the battlements of a Roman fort. Trajan's column, A.D. 113. Both machines represent the new bolt-projecting torsion catapult introduced by the Romans during the second half of the first century, having wide, low tension-frames made of iron which were enclosed in cone-topped cylindrical metal cases to protect the sinew-bundles from moisture and counter-battery from the enemy. Trajan's column, A.D. 113. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut – Rom.
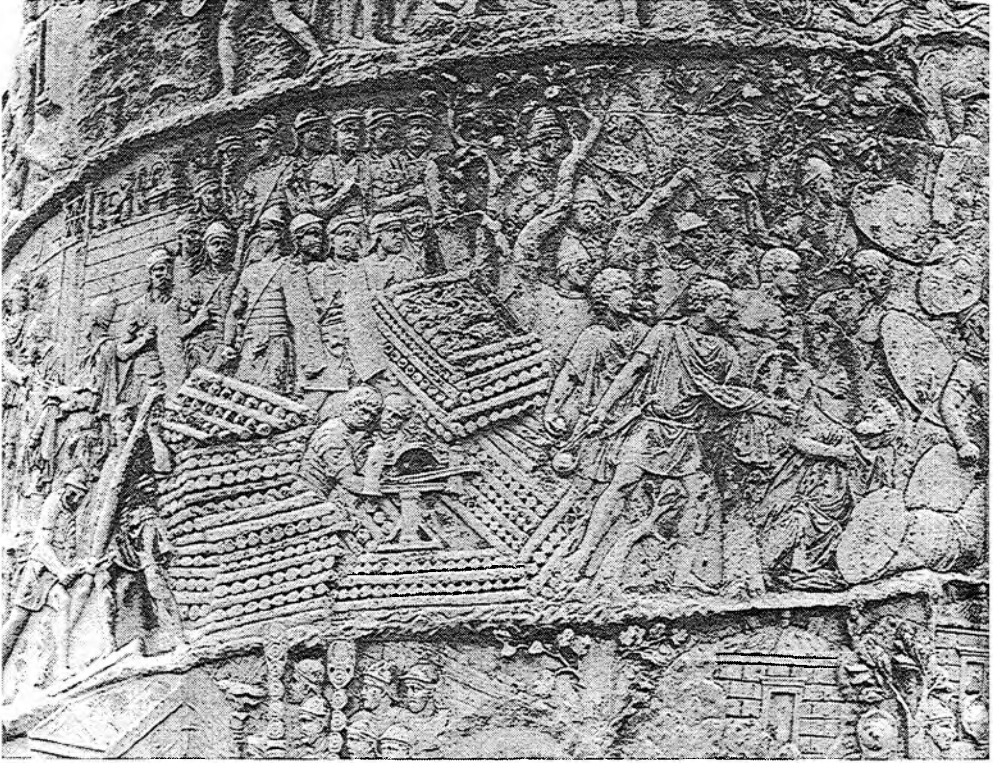
Figure 4. Roman two-armed, metal-frame, bolt-projecting torsion catapult positioned in an artillery "pill box" constructed in front of a Roman fort. Trajan's column, A.D. 113. Deutsches Archäeologisches Institut – Rom.
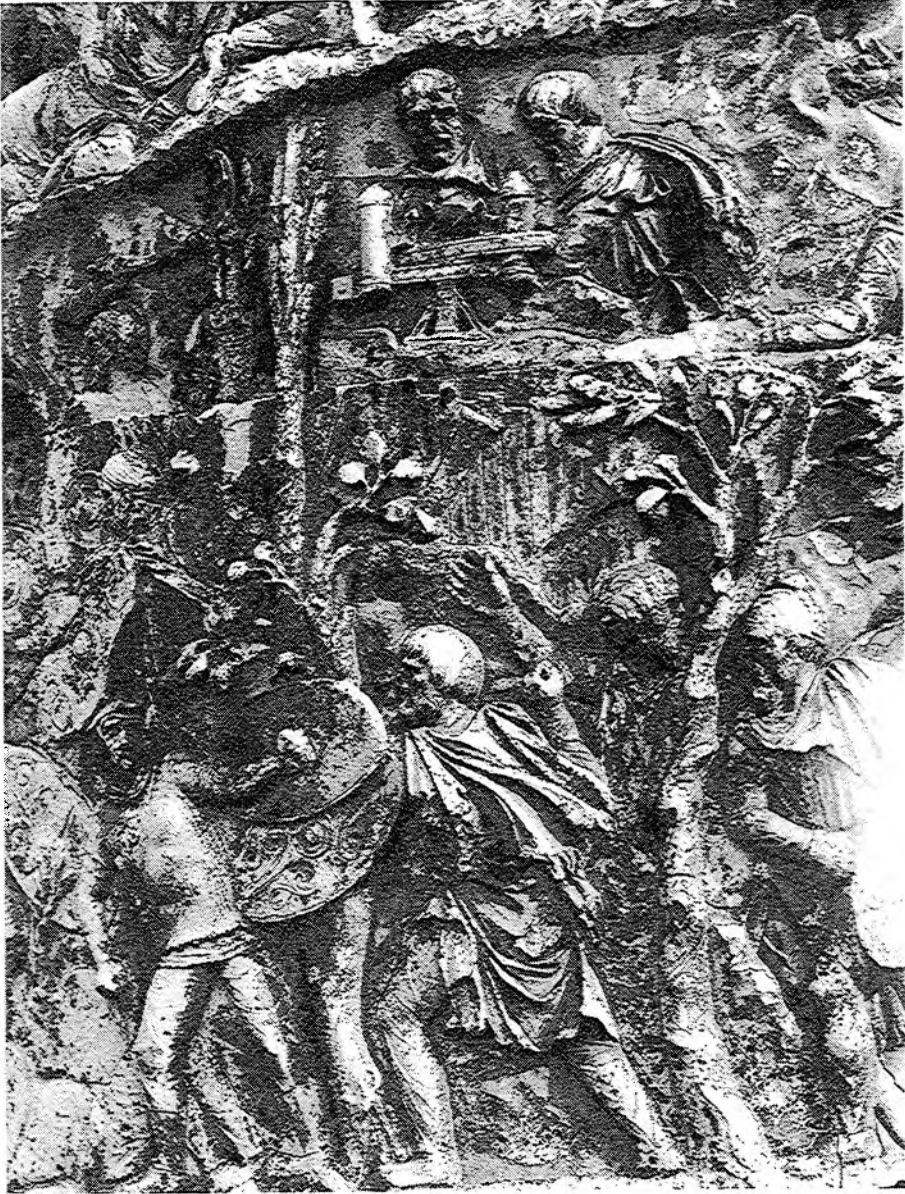
Figure 5. Dacian artillerists operating a two-armed, metal-frame, bolt-projecting torsion catapult behind a wooden palisade. Trajan's column, A.D. 113. Deutsches Archäeologisches Institut – Rom.

Figure 6. Two Roman *carroballistae* depicted on Trajan's column, A.D. 113. The *carroballista* was the first truly mobile piece of field artillery. It consisted of a two-arm, metal-frame, bolt-projecting torsion catapult mounted on a specially designed two-wheeled cart drawn by two horses or mules.
Deutsches Archäeologisches Institut – Rom.

Figure 7. An iron tension-frame (*kambestrion*) from a Roman two-armed, bolt-projecting, torsion catapult found at Lyon, France (length, 0.325 m.; dia., 0.22 m.; weight, 4.85 kg.). Lyon, Musée de la civilisation Gallo-Romaine. The arched strut at the rear of the tension-frame serves to accomodate the movement of the catapult arm as it is pulled back by the bowstring. The bottom pair of rings (R.) welded onto the two vertical struts holds the bottom transom, known as the *klimakion* (little ladder), while the upper pair of rings (L.) holds the upper transom, known as the *kamarion* (little arch).
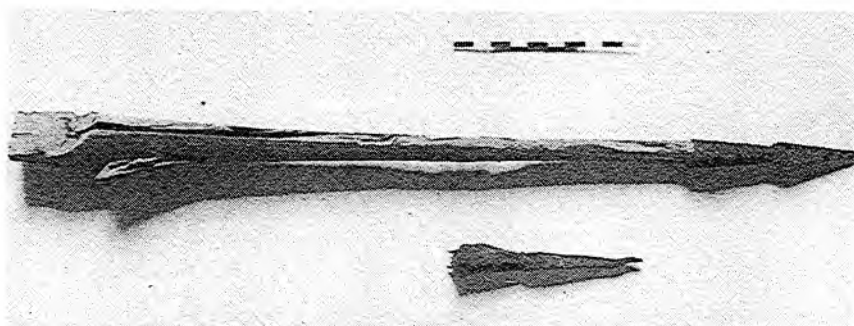


Figure 8. Complete Roman catapult bolt (above) and the head of a catapult bolt (below) dating from the middle of the third century A.D. from Dura-Europos. The shaft, made of ash, has a sharp four-sided iron head and three triangular wooden vanes made of maple (length, 0.375 m.; dia. tapering from 0.014 m. to 0.033 m.). Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection.
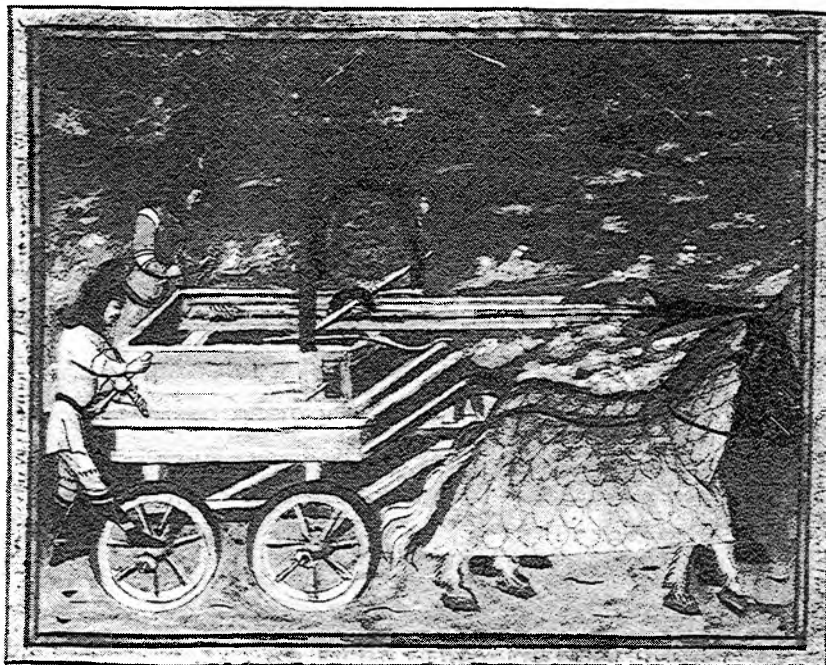
Figure 9. The four-wheeled *Ballista* (*ballista quadrirotis*) in *De rebus bellicis,* made at Basel in 1436 for Pietro Donato, bishop of Padua, from a lost Carolingian manuscript in the Cathedral of Speyer.
Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Misc. 378, fol. 71v.
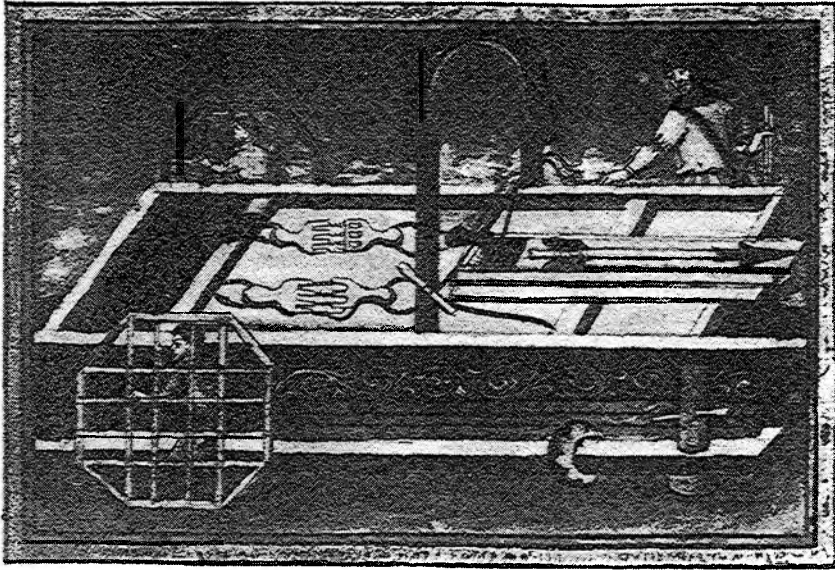
Figure 10.  The "Thunderbolt" *Ballista* (*ballista fulminalis*) in *De rebus bellicis*, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Misc. 378, fol. 76r.

# [22]

## TENTH CENTURY BYZANTINE OFFENSIVE SIEGE WARFARE: INSTRUCTIONAL PRESCRIPTIONS AND HISTORICAL PRACTICE[1]

## DENIS SULLIVAN

The opening paragraph of Clive Foss and David Winfield's *Byzantine Fortifications: an Introduction* (Pretoria, 1986) reads: «It is commonly accepted that most of the principles governing the ancient and medieval arts of fortification were already known by about the second century B. C. Methods of siege by mining, by rams, by siege towers, or by forms of artillery were in use in the Hellenistic period and to counter these there were no fundamental changes in methods of fortification until the introduction of efficient cannon». The paragraph concludes: «The Byzantines profited from their reading of Philo of Byzantium and the Franks may have profited from Vegetius, both using texts that were hundreds of years old».

While one could cite important changes in the nature of artillery (the Hellenistic *lithobolos* with its dual vertical torsion systems to the one-armed *onager* with horizontal torsion popular in the late antique period, and to use of the beam-sling trebuchet), the basic correctness of Foss and Winfield's contention for offensive methods as well as fortification defense further complicates the already

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difficult task of distinguishing antiquarian traditionalism from actual practice in the corpus of 10th century Byzantine military instructional manuals in that many Hellenistic offensive siege methods continued to be found useful twelve centuries later[2].

The revival of military science in the tenth century, spanning the period from the *Tactika* of Leo VI, dated 906, to the *Tactika* of Nikephoros Ouranos, dated to the end of century, as has been noted[3], coincides with a change from defensive to offensive warfare on the part of the Byzantine empire. A number of these treatises contain prescriptions for the conduct of offensive siege operations and construction and use of siege engines. Specifically such recommendations can be found in detail in *Constitutio* 15 of Leo's work with scattered information elsewhere in that treatise; in the *Poliorcetica*[4] of the so-called Heron of Byzantium and in the *Sylloge tacticorum* (both probably mid-tenth century); in the *De velitatione* of Nikephoros Phokas; in the anonymous *De re militari*; and in the 65th chapter of Nikephoros Ouranos' *Tactika*. Offensive tactics can also be cited or inferred from treatises devoted entirely to withstanding a siege, such as the *De obsidione toleranda*[5] (after 924). In addition, Byzantine and Arab historical sources provide information of widely varying detail on actual 10th century sieges. John Kaminiates[6], for example, describes the siege in 904 of Thessalonika by Arabs employing a scaling ladder, concentrated bursts of arrows, engines for hurling rocks, use of fire against the gates, towers on pairs of yoked ships, with the troops on them shouting and using flame throwers (σίφωνες), these last being the deciding factor in causing the defenders to leave the walls and allowing the Arabs in; and Leo the Deacon those of Chandax (960-961), Tarsos (965), Antioch (969), Great Preslav (971) and Silistria (Dorostolon) (971). The *De Cerimoniis* provides details of the outfitting of the

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2. Manipulation of basic necessities such as food and water supplies and various psychological pressures would seem to be timeless. For the continued viability of such siege techniques one might note that Maurice's recommendation in the *Strategikon* (X, 1: 46-48), repeated by Leo in the *Taktika* (XV:26), of using constant noise (θόρυβος) day and night to exhaust the besieged, has been employed in siege situations within the past twelve years (aided by modern amplification technology) in Panama against Manuel Noriega and in Waco, Texas against the Branch Davidians.

3. See McGeer, p. 171.

4. For the manuscript tradition and editions see A. Dain, *La tradition du texte d'Héron de Byzance*, Paris 1933 and «Les stratégistes byzantins», *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), pp. 317-392, specifically p. 358. I currently am preparing an annotated edition with English translation based on what Dain has shown to be the archetype ms., Vat. Gr. 1605.

5. See H. van den Berg, *Anonymous de obsidione toleranda*, Leiden 1947. For another 10th century text on defending against a siege see A. Dain, «Memorandum inédit sur la défense des places», *Revue des Études Grecques* 53 (1940), pp. 123-136.

6. See G. Böhlig, *De expugnatione Thessalonicae*, Berlin 1973, pp. 30:64-33:67.

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failed expedition against Crete under Constantine Gongyles in 949 with references to siege equipment included, but often employing terminology whose interpretation is controversial.

The dependence of the 10th century Byzantine military treatises on classical and early Byzantine sources has long been recognized, and has been analyzed in detail most recently by Gilbert Dagron[7] and by Eric McGeer[8] with reference to distinguishing actual 10th century practice from the earlier tradition. The dependence of the historians on earlier sources has also been the subject of analysis. M. Sjuzjumov[9], for example, showed that Leo the Deacon's description of the sapping of the wall of Chandax in Nikephoros Phokas' siege of 961 was lifted almost verbatim from Agathias' description of Narses' siege of Cumae. The opposite has been suggested in the case of Kaminiates by Alexander Kazhdan[10], who has argued that Kaminiates' text as it now stands has been reworked by a 15th century author who has added details of the siege description more characteristic of the later period.

The attempt, then, to describe offensive siege warfare in tenth century Byzantium requires criteria which will assist in identifying contemporary practice amid classical and early Byzantine tradition. Arnold Toynbee has suggested that: «We shall have less hesitation in regarding an item taken by Leo from 'Mavrikios' as being still valid if we find the same item re-appearing in one or more of the three works[11] that were written by professional soldiers in the third quarter of the tenth century. Yet this corroborative evidence is not conclusive[12]». I would add to this that the inclusion of a tactic or device in the historical sources, in a context not obviously plagiarized from an earlier source, would also suggest contemporary practice. Professor Dagron[13] has suggested three other criteria: (1) «does the text record changes or innovations in military equipment? (2) does it present a distinct enemy with particular tactics and characteristics? and, (3) does it shed light on the relations between the army and the society from which it is drawn»? While his third

7. G. Dagron, H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*, Paris 1986, pp. 141-144.

8. McGeer, pp. 194-195.

9. M. Sjuzjumov, «On the Sources of Leo the Deacon and Scylitzes» (in Russian), *Vizantiskoe Obozrenie* 2 (1916), p. 106ff.

10. A. Kazhdan, «Some Questions Addressed to the Scholars who Believe in the Authenticity of Kaminiates' "Capture of Thessalonica"», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 71 (1978), pp. 301-314.

11. I.e. the *De velitatione*, the *De re militari* and the *Taktika* of Ouranos.

12. A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, London 1973, p. 294.

13. Dagron, Mihăescu, pp. 141-144; cf. McGeer, p. 194.

criterion does not find direct applicability in descriptions of offensive siege warfare, the first two are quite relevant. My approach, then, will be to focus on offensive siege techniques as described in the tenth century military manuals, listing the specific tactics and devices described and identifying, where possible, indications of actual tenth century use, whether traditional or innovative, by application of the criteria. As Leo's *Taktika* is the first and longest, it may be helpful to use this text as a base and touchstone, summarizing its main recommendations, noting dependence on and differences with its classical and early Byzantine sources, and absence, presence and difference of emphasis in the later tenth century sources[14]. I will then consider some additional recommendations found in Heron of Byzantium without precedent in the classical or early Byzantine material.

Leo's *Taktika* as a whole draws heavily on the 1st century *Strategikos* of Onasander and the late 6th/early 7th century *Strategikon* of Maurice[15]. The 15th *Constitutio* on siege warfare (titled Περὶ πολιορκίας πόλεων) is within that tradition; the vast majority of its material, particularly the tactical and psychological, comes from these two sources. In what follows I paraphrase (in italics) Leo's recommendations, note his sources and significant differences from them, and similar recommendations in the later 10th century sources.

Leo begins (XV:1) by noting that he will present material *anthologized from ancients and moderns* (ἐκ τε παλαιῶν καὶ νέων) *on offensive and defensive siege warfare; the general should use the treatise as a starting point to devise other things* (προσεπινοῆσαι) *which have not been specifically mentioned, with the necessity of time and place instructing him in each thing.* Leo makes a related comment later at XV:34-35, following his list of siege machines: *there are other machines which you will find by searching in other histories and strategic <manuals>, both how they are constructed and how they are brought forward and in what locations of the besieged <city>. The preparation and readying of these machines can be achieved not only by you, but also through the invention* (ἐπίνοια) *of the manganarioi with you, men skilled in such construction; so that you yourself may devise what is possible and useful and they by their handiwork and their inventiveness <derived from experience> may assist you.*

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14. Leo the Deacon provides a number of these examples; his bias toward Nikephoros Phokas must be taken into account in considering his positive descriptions of Phokas' courage and kindness to the vanquished.

15. See E. McGeer, «Taktika of Leo VI», *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, N.Y., Oxford 1991, 3, p. 2008.

Leo's reference here to inventive use of manuals by the field officer is not easy to parallel in his sources, although Onasander (42:3) does indicate that he will not recommend specific siege engines, that the general must choose based on «the luck, wealth, and power of the combatants, and on the skill of the workmen who accompany the army». More interesting is the repetition of this concept in later 10th century sources. Eric McGeer[16] has gathered a number of other such passages and I follow his discussion and translations here. In the *De velitatione*, Nikephoros Phokas (203:73ff) says, regarding ambushes: «All this we are setting forth as experience teaches. It is up to you to apply it in the circumstances and the urgent needs of the time. For tradition alone does not do it, but it must be reinforced by the assistance of God, and only then will the outcome of the battle be assured». It is particularly interesting here that it is not just tradition which must be adapted, but even Phokas' own personal battlefield experience. Nikephoros Ouranos (161:139ff) indicates: «The men of old, in their conduct of siege warfare, constructed many devices such as rams, wooden towers, scaling ladders with various features, as well as tortoises and all kinds of other things that our generation has never seen. It has, however, tried all these devices and discovered that of all of them, the more effective way, one the enemy cannot match, is undermining the foundations, all the more so if one does this with careful scrutiny and method ....». Michael Psellos[17] indicates that Basil II prepared army formations «taking some from handbooks and devising others by virtue of his own expertise in reaction to the circumstances». Finally Kekaumenos[18] in the eleventh century advocates the necessity of going beyond the ancients, of devising something new, of the obligation of the general to come up with his own inventions. I would add to McGeer's list the comment in the *De re militari* (317:9-11): «About these matters <i.e. siege methods> you will find that the ancient authorities have written excellent and very practical things in their books more scientifically and in greater detail than the present work». These references, overt or implied, to use the books as a source of information, but also inspiration and invention, fit well with Leo's sentiment and appear more than a common place. The military practitioners are described as using the classical material, often either accepting or rejecting it based on empirical experience and specific conditions, and also using it as inspiration for new methods[19]. Perhaps the reality of such use is best exemplified in the treatise on imperial expeditions

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16. McGeer, pp. 191-195.

17. See E. Renauld, *Michel Psellos: Chronographie*, 2 vols., Paris [2]1967, I, 33:1.

18. See G.G. Litavrin, *Sovety i Rasskazy Kekavmena*, Moscow 1972, p. 136: 20-29.

19. Heron of Byzantium (269:3-6), following the first century Athenaeus Mechanicus, also advocates the value specifically of invention (προσευρίσκειν).

attributed to Constantine VII which includes in the emperor's baggage on military expeditions books on siege devices (βιβλία μηχανικά) and artillery (βελοποιϊκά)[20], among other titles. Thus a general on campaign, at least if he follows the direction of the bibliophile Constantine VII, will have available such instructional manuals for consultation, even right in the field.

At XV:2 Leo, following Onasander (XL:1), notes that *a siege requires a general's*[21] *courage* (ἀνδρεία) *and strategic intelligence* (διάνοια) *and preparation of machines* (μηχανήματα), *and in the besieged city or stronghold* (φρούριον) *or fortification* (ὀχύρωμα) *security* (ἀσφάλεια) *<achieved> through diligence* (προσο-χή). This generic comment is not found in the later sources, but Leo does here elaborate on Onasander with specific mention of strongholds and fortifications.

*Leo's specific recommendations begin with section XV:3:*
    XV:3 *First secure your own camp with a deep ditch or constructions* (κτίσμα-τα) *of stone, brick or wood as you devise* (ἐπινοήσεις) *and with many and careful guards, especially at unexpected places where there can be incursions of besieged or other enemies outside by day or night, as has often happened.*

Leo's suggestion here of a stone, brick or wood wall is more detailed and elaborate than in his immediate source, Maurice (248:9-13), but is found later in Maurice (258:3-4) of a fortified camp for troops building a fortress in enemy territory. Leo, by this shift, perhaps wishes to stress the importance of siege camp security and its greater duration at one site[22]. The concern is also found in Ona-sander (XL:2) who more briefly recommends use of a «trench, palisade (χάρακι) and guards» for a siege camp, but is stressed as well in the later 10th century manuals and historians where the trench and palisade are frequently mentioned[23]. Leo also mentions at *Constitutio* XI:26 camp perimeter security devices, two-legged stands into which spears were inserted, devices Leo describes as invented by

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20. See J. Haldon, *Three Treatises on Imperial Expeditions, CFHB* 28, Vienna 1991, p. 106:196-199 and McGeer, p. 193 note 41.

21. The emendation of A. Köchly (*Onosandri de imperatoris officio liber,* Leipzig 1860), of στρα-τιωτῶν for στρατηγῶν in Leo's source text should perhaps also be adopted in Leo as well.

22. Leo the Deacon (72:18ff) describes a stone φρούριον built by Nikephoros Phokas on a hilltop near Antioch to serve as a base for raids and to interdict supplies from reaching the city as a prelude to its capture.

23. The 10th century Byzantine camp with trench, palisade and perimeter security devices is well discussed by McGeer, pp. 350-354. One might add to the comments there that the *De re militari* (306:91-93) recommends a ditch (τάφρον) be dug around a siege camp and the addition of a wall (τεῖχος) if the siege is likely to be a long one.

his general Nikephoros Phokas, grandfather of the later emperor; a similar device is also mentioned by Ouranos in his *Taktika* specifically of a siege camp in combination with caltrops (τριβόλια καὶ τριοκέλια μετὰ τζιπάτων)[24]. Leo then adds from Onasander (XL:3): *for those outside cannot see inside the walls, but they from the walls can see you and your likely actions against them.* Heron of Byzantium[25], following the 2hd century A. D. Apollodorus of Damascus, describes composite observation ladders on swing beams which would allow besiegers to see over the walls. There is no other evidence that such devices were actually built in the 10th century, but the Byzantine Heron does differ from Apollodorus in his discussion of the dimensions of these observation ladders[26], and adds two new forms of bases for them, one of which is described as similar to an «uncial eta» (ἦτα λιτόν), a use of λιτός not found before the late ninth century[27].

XV:4 *Guard gates and portals of city or castle and roads from other fortifications to prevent sudden enemy forays, especially at night.* The comments follow Onasander (XLI:1), but again Leo's specification here of castle (κάστρον) is more detailed, as is his specific concern with roads from other fortresses. Leo the Deacon (148:1-3) describes a foray by Russians besieged in Dorostolon to attempt to burn the Byzantine siege machines.

XV:5 *Begin your siege at night –darkness causes confusion, weakens the enemy's mind, makes events more fearful, causes quicker surrender. One or two men reaching the wall can seem like a whole army and cause besieged to abandon them.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XLII:1); the *De velitatione*, by contrast, (224:44-47) recommends that the besieged use night fighting to disperse the besiegers.

XV: 6 *The general himself should be involved in the hard work to shame the troops into more eager participation.* Leo follows Onasander (XLII:2). The recommendation is not found in the later manuals, but Leo the Deacon describes Nikephoros Phokas as inspiring his troops by fighting in the front lines during siege

24. See McGeer, p. 350 and note 32.

25. Heron of Byzantium, pp. 232:13-238:11.

26. On the devices and the differences in dimensions see O. Lendle, *Texte und Untersuchungen zum technischen Bereich der antiken Poliorketik*, Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 28-34.

27. See Heron of Byzantium 237:8; for this use of λιτός and date see B. Atsalos, *La terminologie du Livre-Manuscrit à l'époque byzantine*, Thessaloniki 1971, p. 106ff. I am grateful to Alice-Mary Talbot for bringing this reference to my attention.

assaults (29:22ff) and as picking up and carrying the first stone for construction of a fortification to serve as a base for harassment of Antioch in preparation for a siege (74:13-15).

XV:7 *Begin with precise reconnaissance; strangle their supply of food and water; if they are well supplied, you must use engines.* The bulk of the recommendation follows Maurice (248:13-16), although the recommendation for initial reconnaissance is not in Maurice or Onasander. It is however found later in Heron of Byzantium (204:8-9), in Leo the Deacon's (11:6-8) description of Nikephoros Phokas before Chandax and Michael Bourtzes at Antioch (81:22-23), and in the *De re militari* (306:69-70). The recommendation to cut off supplies to the besieged, briefly mentioned by Maurice and Leo here, is the subject of extensive comments in the later manuals. The *Sylloge tacticorum* (32:5ff) follows Onasander who, speaking generally of what to do when advancing against the enemy, begins by recommending destruction of the enemy's country side, noting that «loss of money and shortage of crops reduce warfare as abundance nourishes it». The author of the *Sylloge* connects this tactic specifically to siege warfare, also substituting for Onasander's φθειρέτω καὶ καιέτω καὶ τεμνέσθω, his own phrasing ἀφειδῶς καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ξίφει κειρέτω, φειδόμενος μηδενός. From a defensive perspective the *De velitatione* (222:6ff) recommends that a city facing a siege have 4 months of food and water for each person, and (226:52) use of a diversion to get supplies into the city. The *De re militari* (302:3ff) recommends frequent raids and creation of hunger prior to a siege as a *sine qua non* of success. Nikephoros Ouranos (152:5ff) similarly recommends initial raids, destruction of harvests, interdiction of commerce, with specific reference to readiness of Saracens to aid their fellows with money and food. Starvation is mentioned a number of times in Leo the Deacon's siege accounts, most dramatically (60:3,6,16) in Nikephoros Phokas' siege of Tarsos.

XV: 8-9 *Parade your best looking and best equipped soldiers near their walls. Keep less desirable troops at a distance with the baggage so enemy can't distinguish animals from men. Then even these will seem like those near the wall. Show the loricatoi and kataphraktoi with kassides; show even those troops without <armour>, by some artifice, as if they were lorikatoi with kassides.*
Leo here follows Maurice (248:16-250:2), but updates the vocabulary from Maurice's ζαβάτοι with σκαπλία to λωρικάτοι and κατάφρακτοι[28]. He continues

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28. On the terminology see J. Haldon, «Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Terminology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries», *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975), pp. 11-47, specifically p. 34.

*make your camp at a distance so all men seem to be soldiers.* The concept of creating fear through a display of power is also found in Leo the Deacon's (70:10-11) description of Nikephoros Phokas before Antioch and in the *De re militari* (306:73-74) which recommends at the beginning of a siege: «Early the next day our holy emperor should command the cavalry and infantry units to be armed. In good order and with proper display he should proceed toward the city. From the sight alone the enemy may be confounded and lose heart».

XV:10 *Make your camp at a distance so that all viewed by those within appear to be soldiers.* Leo here follows Maurice (250:2-3).

XV:11-12 *Give easy terms for surrender –to leave and take animals or wagons or other portable property; this leads to hope of safety and dissension (διχόνοια) within and weaker opposition. Harsh terms are not characteristic of a good general –they make dangers of siege seem less and create unity within.* The recommendation follows Maurice (250:3-9). Nikephoros Ouranos (157:73ff) makes a similar suggestion, that the besieging general offer: «if you are willing to surrender the fortress to us by your own choice, you will keep your possessions». Ouranos continues with mention of gifts for agreeing to capitulate, loss of possessions and slavery and, for some groups, beheading for resistance, noting that this leads to disagreement (διχόνοια) and dissension, the similar terminology perhaps suggesting the influence of Leo on the later writer.

XV:13 *In long sieges see especially to your own supplies.* The recommendation follows Maurice (250:9). The concern is highly elaborated in the later treatises. The *De velitatione* (224:42-43) comments from a defensive perspective that the lack of supplies can cause a siege to be lifted; the *De re militari* (302:18ff) indicates the necessity of adequate provisions for besiegers, describes at great length the difficulties of transporting supplies into Arab and especially Bulgarian territory, and makes recommendations for keeping mountain passes open and transporting necessities by mules and wagons. Leo the Deacon (126:23ff) describes John Tzimiskes' prepositioning of supplies at Adrianople for the siege of Great Preslav.

XV:14 *Estimate the number of men needed for each task and assign them specifically.* The recommendation is from Maurice (250:10-11); the *De re militari* (306:69-71) recommends assigning to each man in writing a specific place both in camp and in τειχομαχία; Ouranos (156:70-72) recommends setting specific places around the besieged fortress by units.

XV:15-16 *Don't use whole army at one time, assign different divisions by hours of day and night. Harass the enemy in shifts* (ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἀλλήλων) *by day with war, by night with fear, using men assigned to each task. If your army is large enough to conduct the siege at night, let some troops sleep, using shifts; don't give the enemy any rest.*

The recommendation for attack in shifts is found at Onasander (XLII:7) and Maurice (250:11-16). The same recommendation appears in Heron of Byzantium (204:14), in the *Sylloge tacticorum* (104:6), and in great detail in Nikephoros Ouranos (158:100-160:116) who recommends that the army be divided specifically into three teams, two teams resting while the third prosecutes the siege. The *De re militari* (318:19ff) recommends «no let up by night and day in attacking the wall».

XV:17 *Traitors will often show you an unexpected place to take a fortress.* The recommendation in this concise form is not found in the sources. John Skylitzes[29] reports that a Saracen traitor, influenced by gifts and promises, provided information on the height of a tower at Antioch, allowing ladders of matching height to be constructed. Leo the Deacon (81:22), however, attributes the information to the direct observation of the Byzantine commander, Bourtzes.

XV:18 *In such sieges in shifts get a little rest yourself, general, to be sober* (νήψης) *for your duties.* The recommendation is found in Onasander (XLII:14), but is not specifically mentioned in the later manuals or historians.

XV:19 *Encircle the wall with different units carrying ladders; use also rams and tortoises and towers and other siege engines. This causes the enemy to concentrate on the engines, and your other units with ladders may find parts of the wall free. If the enemy responds, then the machines are more successful.* The tactic of combined engines at one place, ladders at others is found in Onasander (XLII:4-6); it is not specifically mentioned in the later manuals, but Leo the Deacon (135:10ff) describes the siege of Great Preslav in which assault techniques were used, then ladders set up and one brave soldier climbed to the top of the wall, inspiring others to follow. The list of siege machines here varies from the source Onasander as noted below.

XV: 20 *Seemingly impregnable places can be taken because the enemy is not observant there. You devise a way. Use ladders, or other types of ascent; reward climbers, let them sound trumpets to cause fear, then when he enemy flees, open the*

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29. *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. H. Thurn, Berlin-New York 1973, p. 272, 95ff.

*gates.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XLII:15-16). Attack on seemingly impregnable places is not found in the later manuals, but the use of trumpets to cause fear is found at Heron of Byzantium (204:15-16).

XV: 21-22 *If a city is populous and powerful and they may dare to resist the entering besiegers and to take the high ground and inflict harm from there, announce using the local dialect that no unarmed person will be killed, –the besieged will be in such straits as to throw down their arms.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XLII:18-19), but the suggestion of using the local language is not in the source.

XV: 23 *In a lengthy siege if you take prisoners, let the women, children and aged go back in; they will harm the besieged by consuming supplies, and you will appear humane to them and may encourage capitulation.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XLII: 23).

XV: 24 *Camp one or two miles (μιλίου) from the siege so your resting troops are not disturbed by the noise.* The recommendation follows Maurice (150:18-20). The *Sylloge tacticorum* (103:24-25) recommends that the camp be placed at least 2 miles or 8 stades from the city; the *De re militari* (306:81ff) recommends a distance of at least two bow-shots, but close enough to protect against forays against the siege engines.

XV: 25 *Make no careless raids lest you suffer casualties and the besieged be encouraged. Troops can even be hit by tiles or stones thrown by women.* The initial recommendation is from Maurice (150:20-22), the latter comment from Thucydides' (II:4:2) siege of Plataea. Byzantine casualties at Chandax as a result of a careless raid (the troops become drunk) are described by Leo the Deacon (9: 22ff).

XV: 26 *If you are besieging small fortresses, attack seems dangerous, and they have supplies, hasten to harass them with noise day and night –they will tire of the vexation.* The recommendation follows Maurice (X, 1:46-48).

XV: 27 *If houses within can be set on fire, use a hail of fire arrows when wind is violent, binding inflammable material to the arrow; <and> with stonethrowing magganika, the so-called alakatia and tetrareai, stones filled with flammable material are thrown against the houses. While they are extinguishing the fires, put*

up ladders and order soldiers to climb them confidently. Leo's source here is Maurice (X, 1:51) who speaks of pots (χουζία) filled with fire and launched into the city with πετροβόλοι. Leo speaks of «stones» (πετρῶν) filled with fire and launched διὰ τῶν πετροβόλων μαγγανικῶν τῶν λεγουμένων ἀλακατίων, ἢ τετραρέων. Whatever the nature of the incendiary, Leo uses contemporary terms (*alakatia and tetrareaî*) for the stonethrowers[30].

XV:28 *There are different siege engines devised by the ancient generals and the men who lived a little before our time according to the requirements of time and place. One cannot now say which to use in your siege, but the requirements of the time will teach you each:*

XV: 29 *There are the so-called rams through which walls are battered.*

XV: 30 *Wooden towers covered with hides or other material against destruction by fire. Those who bring them to the wall on wheels fight from on high those on the wall.*

XV: 31 *Tortoises are brought to the wall and men undermine the foundations.*

XV: 32 *Composite ladders are brought to the wall, or placed on upright beams, and brought up on wheels.*

XV: 33 *Mines are begun underground outside the wall and proceed within through the foundations and break through the ground within the city.*

XV: 34 *To be brief, there are other engines which are in other histories, but especially in military books –seek and you will find, both how they are prepared and how advanced and in what places of the besieged.*

XV: 35 *The preparation of these machines can be done not only by you but by the manganaroi with you, men educated for such preparations. You will devise and they will assist.*

Leo's introduction to this list of siege devices presumably is inspired by Onasander (XLII:3), but with considerable variation. Onasander gives only a brief

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30. See below page 199 and notes 50-51.

list of siege machines: rams, helepoleis, sambucas, wheeled towers, filler-tortoises and catapults without further comment. Leo has omitted the sambucas, helepoleis (the classical term most often referred to a tower, but Byzantine usage is apparently generic of any siege engine) and mentioned artillery earlier in XV:27 with reference to incendiaries, has changed the filler-tortoise to the tortoise designed to protect sappers and adds specific reference to ladders and to sapping the foundations of the walls and tunneling under them. The source of his specific choice of devices is unclear and presumably reflects Leo's judgement of what is most useful in his own time. All the devices are mentioned in the later manuals. Heron of Byzantium provides related instruction on how to excavate through a wall using tortoises (214:5ff), on construction and use of wooden towers with hide coverings (238:12ff), and on construction and use of rams (248:5ff). Notably wheeled ladders[31] are not mentioned in the classical sources, but are mentioned in Heron of Byzantium (256:9ff). The list of siege equipment in the *De Cerimoniis* (670:10ff) includes a wooden tower (ξυλόπυργος), tortoises (χελῶναι), rams on tortoises (εἰς μὲν τὰς χελώνας κριοί), and tools which appear useful for excavating a wall, i.e. earth-shakers (?), sledge hammers and pick-axes (σείστας, τζόκους, and ἀξινορύγια), as well as artillery. Theodosios the Deacon[32] mentions rams, tortoises, rock-throwing slings and composite ladders. The *De re militari* (316:5ff) lists mining (ὑπὸ γῆν ὀρύγματα), rams, tortoises, stone throwers (πετροβόλοι), laisai (λέσαι)[33], wooden towers, ladders and use of mounds. Nikephoros Ouranos (65:139ff), noting that the ancients used rams, wooden towers, ladders and tortoises and that his generation has tried all these, recommends as the most effective method undermining the foundations (τὸ διὰ τῶν θεμελίων ὄρυγμα), and provides detailed instruction on how to do so. But he further recommends (65:106ff) that while the mining goes on other troops attack with archery (διὰ τοξείας) and slinging (διὰ σφενδοβόλων), with artillery (διὰ μαγγανικῶν), and to attempt to break through the walls <above ground> with sledge-hammers (μετὰ τζόκων) and earthshakers (?) (<μετὰ> σει-στῶν). In the historical sources Ibn al-Atir reports[34] that John Kourkouas besieged Debil in 927 using towers, while Dahabi[35] indicates that a Byzantine attempt on Amid in 951 involved «une galerie souterraine d'une longueur de 4 milles», but which failed when discovered by the inhabitants. Leo the Deacon more than once

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31. Wheeled ladders are also found in the *Miracula of St. Demetrius* (see P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius, I, Le Texte*, Paris 1979, p. 203: 25).

32. *De Creta capta*, ed. U. Criscuolo, Leipzig 1979, pp. 325-327.

33. On this Byzantine version of a tortoise see below 196-197.

34. Vasiliev, p. 150.

35. Vasiliev, p. 242.

mentions the use of ladders and stone throwers, and, in the siege of Chandax, a ram and mining, although the description of the mining is taken from Agathias. Leo's mention of the *manganarioi* uses contemporary terminology for Onasander's (XLII:3) comment «the skill (ἐπινοίας) of the workmen (ἀρχιτεκτόνων) who accompany the army for the purpose of building engines».

XV: 36 *Receive favorably traitors of city or fortress or road of entry into enemy territory and keep faith with them if they tell you the truth, not for their sake, but for the future ones who will furnish you such favors. You get more than you give. You don't judge them, you are a general, eager to harm the enemy as best you can.* The recommendation is from Onasander (XXXVIII:7-8).

XV: 37-39 *If by God's grace a city or fort or castle either through fear of siege or other cause submits, be gentle and kind to them. And do not impose a tribute or harm them ... but rather be good and kindly. So that others, seeing your kindness to the subjugated, will eagerly come to you expecting to suffer no evil from you which they cannot bear. We know that Nikephoros our general did so to the Lombards when sent by our majesty to subjugate them. For this nation was subjugated to us by precisely conducted wars, employing sagacity and justice and honesty, ... and bestowing freedom on all from slavery and all tribute. For our empire seeks subjection of the enemy not for gain, but for its glory and honor, and salvation and beneficence and with the freedom of its subjects.*

The initial recommendation of kindness is from Onasander (XXXVIII:1), but Leo follows with an extensive comment about the use of this approach by the general Nikephoros Phokas, grandfather of the later emperor, in his subjugation of the Lombards of south Italy in the 884-886. Leo the Deacon (26:20ff) indicates that Nikephoros Phokas stopped the slaughter of Arabs at Chandax who threw down their arms and (156:9-10) that John Tzimiskes provided food to the defeated Russians after the siege of Dorostolon because he preferred peace to war.

XV: 40-41 *By good treatment of those who are subjugated, you make friends of those who are not yet subjected. For wildness and cruelty bring the subjected to regret and make those not yet subjugated more eager to risk danger for their own safety rather than fall into hands of cruel general and you will labor much in your siege and accomplish nothing. But if they learn you are good they will quickly come to submission.*

*As our empire loves good will, decency and peace toward its subjects, whenever through you a city on fort or nation wishes to come to us, it is necessary*

*for you to look to the emotions of our good will and to receive and hold to our orders of good will and safety concerning them.* The initial comment summarizes Onasander (XXXVIII:2-6), the latter is Leo's addition.

XV: 42 *You must know the hours of the day and night through movements of stars and moon to coordinate with traitors.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XXXIX:1).

XV: 43-44 *When going to a siege, use cavalry to take prisoner everyone you meet to prevent knowledge of your coming from reaching enemy. Surprise and unexpected arrival is valuable. Whenever an army comes by surprise, even if smaller, it frightens the enemy. Before they organize you can subdue them.* The recommendation is from Onasander (XXXIX:4-7). The value of surprise is perhaps exemplified in Leo the Deacon's (62:12-13) description of Nikephoros Phokas' capture of various φρούρια as taking place ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς and (166:18) the capture of Borzo, a πόλις ἐρυμνωτάτη, as occurring in the same fashion.

XV: 45 *Do not be overweening in good fortune, show no violent stupidity, but use friendliness and good will. One invites envy, the other emulation.* The recommendation follows Onasander (XLII:24).

The section on offensive operations ends here. The second half of the chapter contains material on defending against a siege drawn almost totally and exclusively from Maurice and concludes with a section on rapid construction of a defensive fortification within enemy territory, again from Maurice. The defensive recommendations often reverse the offensive ones, for example *evacuate, if possible aged, infirm, women and children before the siege begins.* Among the defensive devices described which shed light on offensive operations are various types of padding hung over the wall against stones and rams; hooks, pointed beams, hot pitch (πίσσα), and heavy stones dropped from machines using ropes or chains against tortoises; incendiaries (πυροβόλα), stonethrowers (πετροβόλοι) or countertowers against offensive mobile towers; forays from side gates to burn enemy siege equipment. The bulk of this is drawn from Maurice.

Two examples of the kinds of books on siege devices to which Constantine VII and the other authors cited above were presumably referring are the classical poliorcetic corpus as found in Parisinus suppl. gr. 607, the manuscript brought from Athos to Paris in 1845 by Minoide Mynas, although not made public until 1864, and

the 10th century interpretation of portions of that classical corpus of the so-called Heron of Byzantium found in Vaticanus graecus 1605. Alphonse Dain[36] dated the Paris manuscript to the second quarter of the 10th century. It contains illustrated works on construction of siege machines by Athenaeus Mechanicus (1st century BC), Biton (3rd-2nd century BC), Apollodorus of Damascus (2nd century AD), and Heron of Alexandria (1st century AD), including his work on the *Dioptra*, as well as a collection of excerpts from historians on battles and sieges. The works of Heron of Byzantium, untitled in the archetype manuscript, but generally referred to as a *Poliorcetica* and *Geodesia*, have been published, the former by Wescher as noted above, and the latter by Vincent[37] in 1858 in his collection on Greek geometry, although neither editor worked from the archetype. The works of the Byzantine «Heron» (a paraphrase and updating primarily of the work of Apollodorus of Damascus, Trajan's engineer, and of Heron of Alexandria's *Dioptra*), present a clearly 10th century approach to poliorcetic instruction. In the final chapter of his *Poliorcetica* (276:9-17) the author comments that: «The commanders of the armies, carefully completing with logic and continuous diligence these siege machines, which have been selectively gathered for description and illustration, and always reflecting upon divine justice, honored for their fairness and reverence, and strengthened and guarded by the powerful hand and cooperation and alliance of the God-crowned and Christ-loving emperors of Rome, will easily capture especially the cities of Agar, themselves suffering nothing fatal from the God-damned (θεολέστων) enemy».

The author gives us, then, a specific enemy and an epithet for them which is perhaps indicative. The relatively rare word θεόλεστος occurs three times in the *De Cerimoniis* (514: 6 and 9, 651:15) in the phrase κατὰ τῆς θεολέστου Κρήτης (re. the expedition of 911 against Crete) and in the Δημηγορία Κωνσταντίνου βασιλέως πρὸς τοὺς τῆς ἀνατολῆς στρατηγούς (ed. R. Vári, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 17 [1908], pp. 78-85, V:13) in the phrase κατὰ τῶν χωρῶν καὶ κάστρων τῆς θεολέστου Ταρσοῦ. Theophanes[38] also uses the term generally of Arabs, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεολέστου αὐτῶν ἔθνους. The reference to the use of this compilation on siege warfare against Arabs and this specific rhetorical characterization of them fits well with a mid-tenth century date for the treatise, and suggests at least, that it may have been compiled for use specifically against the Arabs of Crete.

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36. A. Dain, «Les stratégistes byzantins», *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), pp. 317- 92, specifically p. 380.

37. A.- J.-H. Vincent, *Extraits des mss. relatifs à la géométrie pratique des Grecs ...*, Paris 1858, (pages 348-407 contain an edition with French translation of the Geodesia based on ms. Paris S.G., 817).

38. *Chronographia* , ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols., Leipzig 1883-1885, rp. Hildesheim 1963, p. 499:21.

Of particular interest is Heron of Byzantium's pedagogical approach to presentation of his material. In his introduction he begins by commenting on the difficulty of the material and its presentation by the classical poliorcetic authors, which he calls (198:8) the καθολικὴ τεχνολογία. He comments (197:4) that perhaps they are comprehensible «only to ἀγνωσίᾳ». Previous editors have emended the text in various ways[39], but I have suggested in an earlier conference paper[40] that the reading is correct and to be connected with ἀγνωσία as used by Pseudo-Dionysius, e.g., *De. Myst. Theol.* I:3: «into the darkness of unknowing in which one rejects all the perceptions of knowing» (εἰς τὸν γνόφον τῆς ἀγνωσίας καθ᾽ ὃν ἀπομυεῖ πάσας τὰς γνωστικὰς ἀντιλήψεις), and II:1: «through unseeing and unknowing to see and know what is beyond seeing and knowing» (δι᾽ ἀβλεψίας καὶ ἀγνωσίας ἰδεῖν καὶ γνῶναι τὸ ὑπὲρ θέαν καὶ γνῶσιν), that is as «negative cognition» a condition accomplished by the rejection of apprehension through the senses[41]. On this reading the sources, and particularly their illustrations which Heron criticizes are conceptualized by him as at a level of reality beyond normal sense perception and thus beyond the capability of anyone but highly trained engineers to comprehend.

Heron subsequently contrasts the drawings in the classical authors, which he calls σχήματα, with his own approach, which he refers to (199:3,9) as σχηματισμοί. This contrast is also paralleled in Neoplatonism. Simplicius' use of the contrast has been characterized by C. Luna[42] as representing «the participatory relationship between the transcendent figure and the sensible object». Here then Heron seems by choice of terminology to conceptualize his own new approach to technical illustration of siege machines as at the level of what the senses see, the surface appearance, while suggesting that the approach found in his sources is at a higher level of abstraction. This interpretation, which I will not argue at length here, is strengthened not only by the nature of the illustrations in Vaticanus 1605, but by Heron's own brief discussion and interpretation in the *Poliorcetica* (201:1-13) of Plotinus' concept of the tripartite nature of reality and of Plato's concept of «double ignorance» ἄγνοια («thinking one knows, not knowing one doesn't») and references in the *Geodesia* to levels of reality of geometrical figures most closely

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39. ἐννοίᾳ (in the margin of ms. London add. 15276, 16th century); εὐγνωσίᾳ (T. H. Martin); διαγνωσίᾳ (C. Wescher); εὐγνωμοσύνη (for ἀγνωσίᾳ μόνῃ) (R. Schneider).

40. D. Sullivan, «Technical Illustration and Neo-Platonic Levels of Reality in Vaticanus Graecus 1605», *Abstracts of the 19th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, 4-7 November 1993*, Princeton, N.J., pp. 96-97.

41. For discussion of the concept see R. Lees, *The Negative Language of the Dionysian School of Mystical Theology*, 2 vols., Salzburg 1983, especially I: pp. 140-141.

42. See I. Hadot et al., *Simplicius: Commentaire sur les Catégories Fasc. III*, Leiden 1990, p. 148.

paralleled in Proclus. It is also notable in the *Geodesia* that Heron uses for standard geometrical problems, e.g. measuring the height of a wall from a distance or the volume of a cube, highly practical settings, the height of the *quadriga* above the *carceres* in the Hippodrome and the volume of the cistern of Aspar. A comparison of the illustration of the ram tortoise of Hegetor found in the Paris Suppl. Gr. 607 and the same tortoise as illustrated in the Vaticanus conveys this difference clearly, the former a two-dimensional plan, the latter a three-dimensional finished product with human figures. There may also be a certain playful irony in setting practical construction drawings in a mystical and philosophical context. Heron also comments briefly on the problem of classical technical terminology and indicates that, in addition to adding verbal clarifications, he will also use terms more familiar to his readers, concluding (199:4-7): «With common diction and simplicity of style these subjects have been recast by us for greater clarity so that <machines> can be carpentered and constructed easily by anyone». A comparison of his text with that of his sources shows that he carries out this plan consistently, sometimes reordering the presentation of material, often adding explanatory material, frequently altering vocabulary.

Heron's work provides detailed instructions for construction of a variety of siege machines listed in his table of contents (199:11-200:5): tortoises, rams, ladders, mobile towers, observation ladders for viewing over city walls, methods of digging through walls, drop-bridges, sambucas (that is, elevated covered tubes for landing troops on walls), towers on yoked pairs of ships and methods of crossing rivers. Three might be singled out for discussion. At 199:13 Heron mentions, in a list of classical tortoises, «plaited *laisai,* recently invented» (νῦν ... ἐφευρεθεισῶν .. λαισῶν ). This protective shelter called *laisa,* which he specifically designates as a recent invention, is mentioned in five subsequent passages in the work and depicted in two of the manuscript illustrations. Heron describes them (207:17ff) as «made by plaiting vine twigs or fresh cut willow branches in the form of arches;» at 209: 6ff he speaks of «the aforementioned *laisai,* as these are very light and useful for filling ditches, for filling terrains which are swampy and subject to rain, and for levelling all kinds of declivities near the walls, so that we may make the advancing of the siege machines easy and without danger». At 218:7ff Heron says: «Similarly *laisai* and wicker tortoises should be covered on the plaited parts by wet hides of freshly slaughtered cattle as these are able to counteract fire». At 220:9ff: «If we wish to bring down brick walls quickly, we shall make numerous perforations in them with borers, while covered by tortoises coated on top or by *laisai* which have very secure roofs and are covered on the plaited parts with hides of freshly slaughtered cattle

to withstand the heavy objects sent against and the hot liquids poured on them». Finally at 259:12ff Heron comments on a drop bridge: «And it becomes a secure passage for those who wish to very eagerly cross over with *laisai* smeared around their plaited parts with clay or with ash mixed with blood and covered with the hides of freshly slaughtered cattle against incendiaries and boiling liquids poured over them».

Eric McGeer[43] has noted the appearance of the term *laisa* in Heron and in a number of other 10th and 11th century sources, e.g., the *De Obsidione toleranda*, where it refers to protective screens for defenders operating siege machines from the walls, as well as in Kekaumenos and Scylitzes; Nikephoros Ouranos in his *Taktika* (Cp. 65) provides a lengthy discussion of *laisai* which he describes as «house-like with a peaked roof, two or even four entrances and room for 15-20 men». The *laisa* of Ouranos appears larger than those envisioned by Heron or at least the illustrator of the Vatican manuscript where only four men are shown in the *laisa* depicted there. Also the term has some flexibility in apparently referring to screens as well as roofed shelters, and some apparently may have reinforced roofs which make possible their use near walls. McGeer is certainly correct in suggesting that these simpler Byzantine versions of classical tortoises were «standard devices in Byzantine siege warfare during the tenth and eleventh centuries». The various coverings described by Heron –hides of freshly slaughtered cattle, clay, mud, ash mixed with blood– are all found in classical sources, and not mentioned in connection with *laisai* in the other Byzantine sources, but there seems no reason to doubt their contemporary use.

A second passage in Heron (262:6ff) recommends the use of a hand-held device for shooting Greek fire. In describing a drop bridge for mounting a wall Heron concludes: «And if some of those standing on the cross-bridge even with the hand-held swivel tube incendiaries shoot fire in the face of the enemy (μετὰ στρεπτῶν ἐγχειριδίων πυροβόλων κατὰ πρόσωπον τῶν πολεμίων διὰ πυρὸς ἀκοντίζουσι), they will so terrify the defenders standing on the front of the wall, that they will quickly abandon their position, not enduring the attack of battle and the force of fire». The passage is accompanied in Vat. gr. 1605 with the frequently published[44] illustration of the device in use, which unfortunately is not detailed enough to add information on specifically how the device worked. Leo at *Tactica* XIX:57 also

43. E. McGeer, «Tradition and Reality in the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991), pp. 129-140.

44. See, for example, A. M. Stickler and L. E. Boyle (eds.), *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Stuttgart/Zurich 1986, p. 96 and P. Sherrard, *Byzantium*, New York 1966, p. 88.

mentions the χειροσίφων which he describes as recently invented (παρὰ τῆς ἡμῶν βασιλείας ἄρτι κατεσκευασμένα) and which he also says propels the fire into the faces of the enemy. This hand held flame-thrower is thus clearly a late ninth or early tenth century invention. It is also mentioned in other Byzantine sources[45], and the use of such devices in siege situations is attested by the Arab source Ibn al-Atir[46] who records that during the capture of Debil (Dovin) John Kourkouas' use of instruments for shooting Greek fire terrified the city's inhabitants.

A third passage of Heron which is of interest is his description of a torsion system for adding a beam to the end of a ram. When the rams strikes, the beam is released and hits the defenders on the top of the wall. While the device is briefly mentioned by Heron's source Apollodorus (ed. Wescher 187:11-188:9), the Byzantine Heron's description is much more elaborate, drawing in part on Heron of Alexandria's *Belopoiika*, but also adding his own comments. Whatever the practical utility of the device, two issues are of interest. Heron mentions as an alternative to classical torsion material (e.g., animal tendons, women's hair) the use of silk or flax (ἐκ νημάτων σηρικῶν ... ἐκ λίνου). The use of silk for this purpose is not in the classical sources, but is apparently paralleled in the equipment gathered for the Cretan expedition described in the *De Cerimoniis* (670:1 and 670:11-12) where κόρδων μεταξοτῶν are associated with χειροτοξοβολίστραι and μεγάλαι τοξοβολίστραι. While the meaning of μεταξοτός in this passage is contested[47], the apparent parallel in Heron at least suggests the possibility that silk was used. Another wider aspect of Heron's passage, lies in his description of the device (253:19) as ἐν σχήματι παλιντόνου ἀγκῶνος and his subsequent comment (254:8ff) «the construction of the one-arm (μονάγκωνος) <device> will furnish those who wish it with theory about catapults (καταπαλτικὴν θεωρίαν), as it brings together much for long-range shooting with euthytone and palintone engines, i.e. stone shooters (λιθοβόλοις) and missile shooters (ὀξυβελέσιν)». Neither comment is found in his immediate source[48] nor with this specific phrasing in other classical

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45. See J. Haldon and M Byrne, «A possible solution to the problem of Greek fire», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 70 (1977), pp. 91- 99, specifically p. 93 note 6 for the references, and McGeer, *Byzantine Warfare*, pp. 65-66.

46. See Vasiliev, p. 150: «tubes lance-flammes dont le feu pouvait couvrir 12 hommes, et était si violent et si adhérent que personne ne pouvait y résister».

47. See T. G. Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung*, Vienna 1988, p. 251 and note 62, where the use of flax is also discussed.

48. Heron does repeat (253:20ff) Apollodorus' statement: οἷοί εἰσιν οἱ λιθοβόλοι μονάγκωνες οὕς τινες·σφενδόνας καλοῦσιν. His term for «long range shooting», μακροβολεῖν, is found in Philo, *Belopoiika* 50 (ed. E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises*, Oxford 1971).

sources. Kalervo Huuri[49] has noted the passage and its apparent indication that a 10th century λιθοβόλος might be a torsion system, perhaps similar to the onager. While the passage may be only reflecting classical tradition, Heron's comments deserve further consideration in relation to the τὰ μαγγανικὰ ἀλακάτια mentioned by Leo in the *Taktika* and in later 10th century sources[50] (as ἠλακάτια). Heron himself describes (221:4) a well windlass as ὡς φρεατίας ἠλακάτης and the *Scholia in Thucydidem*[51] (7:25:6) says of the windlass καλοῦσι δὲ τὴν μηχανὴν οἱ τοὺς χαμαιλίχοντας ἕλκοντες ἁλιεῖς ἠλακάτην. The *De Cerimoniis* (670:15) says the equipment for the various μαγγανικὰ include πέταλα πορτῶν λόγῳ ἐνδύσεως τῶν διαφόρων τροχιλίων, the τροχίλια here perhaps also suggestive of a windlass. If the devices did involve a windlass, torsion may be involved. The vexed question of whether torsion continued to be used by the Byzantines cannot be solved here[52], but Heron of Byzantium seems to suggest a parallel between this strike beam on a ram and the stone-throwers of his contemporaries, and the term μονάγχων is the standard Greek word for he onager[53].

## Summary

The prescriptions for offensive siege warfare found in Leo's *Taktika* are, as might be expected, largely repetitions of recommendations found in Onasander and Maurice, with some abbreviation, selection, updating of vocabulary, addition of contemporary examples, and inclusion of new material. Yet the continued viability of many of the prescriptions is confirmed by inclusion in the later manuals of practitioners and in the historical sources. Moreover the stance taken by Leo and his successors toward their classical and earlier Byzantine predecessors is clearly articulated as one of adapting the tradition to contemporary circumstances and

49. Huuri, p. 80 and note 2.

50. The passages are collected by Huuri, pp. 85-87.

51. Ed. C. Hude, Leipzig 1927.

52. For the view that «A Byzantine survival of some form of torsion artillery alongside the traction trebuchet, which was known to them as early as the 6th century, is possible but highly unlikely» see W. S. Tarver, «The Traction Trebuchet: A Reconstruction of an Early Medieval Siege Engine», *Technology and Culture* 36 (1995), pp. 136-167, especially p. 142 and note 36. The 6th century example referred to by Tarver is a use of what is almost certainly a trebuchet against Thessalonika described in the *Miracula of St. Demetrius* (see P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius*, I, p. 154 and J. Howard-Johnston, «Thema», [ed. A. Moffat], *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Canberra 1984, pp. 193-194 and note 11). For a review of the trebuchet/torsion issue see R. Rogers, *Latin Siege Warfare in the Twelfth Century*, Oxford 1992. pp. 254-273.

53. See E. W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises*, p. 249.

inventing new approaches where necessary. The classical tactic of constant attack using shifts of troops for example, found also in Maurice, continues to be recommended by both Leo and by the experienced practitioner Nikephoros Ouranos and by implication in the *De re militari*. A number of other similar continuations have been noted. Leo's lists of siege devices at XV:19 (rams, tortoises, towers, and ladders), and at XV:29-33 (rams, towers, tortoises, as well as mining) simplify his immediate source Onasander, indicating selection on his part, and are found in later lists and historical sources. His mention of artillery at XV:27 draws on Maurice, but uses contemporary terminology for the devices. The combination in which these siege machines were used appears to vary with the individual situation. At the same time 10th century variations on classical devices such as the new version of the tortoise called *laisa* and new technology such as the siege camp protection devices and the sophisticated χειϱοσίφων are developed and employed. In addition the adaptation of classical methods extends not only to tactics and devices, but also to the pedagogical method of describing such devices. The ϰαθολιϰή τεχνολογία of the classical engineers is refashioned by Heron of Byzantium with a new approach to illustration as well as an updating of vocabulary and sequencing of ideas and the final product directly connected to the effort against the Arabs.

One final point might be made. Leo the Deacon (29:15ff) describes Nikephoros Phokas' campaign in Syria as one in which he ravaged all in his path, attacked 60 fortresses (φϱούϱια ), and took the vast majority αὐτοβοεί, using siege machines only where walls and numbers required. The term αὐτοβοεί is also used by Leo (135:2) of John Tzimiskes' attack on Great Preslav which is subsequently described as one in which the Byzantines directly attacked the walls with bows, stone throwers, slings and javelins (τόξοις ϰαὶ πετϱοβόλοις ὀϱγάνοις, σφενδόναις τε ϰαὶ ἀϰοντίοις), driving the defenders back from the battlements and then getting onto the wall with ladders and through the gates by force. This type of direct first assault is not specifically recommended in the manuals and appears to be less typical of 10th century sieges. The manuals rather suggest numerous methods of avoiding such a direct assault[54] and an increasing emphasis on slowly exhausting a target city by interdicting its resources and concern with supplying the besiegers themselves[55].

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54. On this point see A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World*, p. 318: «Leo clutches at any possible alternative to an assault».

55. On this strategy see the unpublished D. Phil. thesis of J. Howard-Johnston, *Studies in the Organization of the Byzantine Army in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, Oxford 1971, pp. 238-258. For two recent studies on Byzantine siege warfare and artillery which became available to me too late to be considered here see E. McGeer, «Byzantine Siege Warfare in Theory and Practice», and P. Chevedden, «Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages» in I. Corfis and M. Wolfe, *The Medieval City under Siege*, Woodbridge 1995, pp. 123-129 and 131-173.

# [23]

## Byzantine Siege Warfare in Theory and Practice

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The years between 960 and 1025 stand as the great age of Byzantine military expansion. Led by the great warrior emperors Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes, and Basil II, the Byzantines embarked on their most ambitious campaigns of conquest since the age of Justinian four centuries before. Guiding the Byzantine offensives in east and west was a carefully conceived strategy aimed at isolating and capturing key towns and fortresses, both to consolidate Byzantine control over the surrounding regions and provide stepping stones for subsequent campaigns. To achieve the conquest of Cilicia, Nikephoros Phokas sent an army to capture Adana in 964, to drive a wedge between his next objectives, Tarsos and Mopsuestia; the fall of both towns in the two-pronged assault of 965 opened the way to northern Syria and the ultimate prize, Antioch, which finally fell into Byzantine hands in 969.[1] Four decades later, Basil II took the same systematic approach in his wars against Bulgaria, targeting one crucial stronghold after another (Pliska and the two Preslavs in the east; Berrhoia, Servia, and Vodena in the south; Vidin in the north), to impose a stranglehold on the Bulgars, whose resistance eventually collapsed in 1018.[2] Directed as they were at fortresses and walled towns, the Byzantine campaigns in both theatres naturally entailed extensive siege operations.

Siege tactics and technology must therefore be given considerable scope in the study of Byzantine warfare during the age of conquest, but despite the obvious importance of this subject, the methods and equipment employed by the Byzantines when besieging and defending fortified places have not been examined in detail.[3] My purpose in this study is to offer a preliminary examination of

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[1] For an account of these campaigns, see M. Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des H'amdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, Publication de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger, Second Series, 21 (Algiers: Imp. "La Typolitho" et J. Carbonel, 1953), pp. 803–25.

[2] G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), pp. 307–10.

[3] This is not true of Byzantine fortifications which have been the subject of individual and collective studies; see C. Foss and D. Winfield, *Byzantine Fortifications. An Introduction* (Praetoria: Sigma Press, 1986), with bibliography.

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Byzantine siege warfare based on four sources from the tenth and eleventh
centuries. Two of these belong to the branch of Greek military literature known
as *poliorketika*, or manuals on siege warfare.[4] The first is an illustrated treatise
on siegecraft attributed to the pseudonymus Hero of Byzantium, composed
about the year 950,[5] while the second is an anonymous, untitled treatise known
simply as the *De obsidione toleranda* ("on withstanding sieges"), written most
probably in the first half of the tenth century.[6] As compendia derived from
ancient manuals, these two treatises pose problems of modernity and realism all
too familiar to Byzantinists, but they can be compared with two other contem-
porary texts to form a reasonably accurate picture of Byzantine siege warfare.
These are two treatises written by soldiers who combined knowledge of military
literature with firsthand experience of warfare in their writings, and so provide a
realistic, practical perspective on siege tactics and technology. The first is
Chapter 65 of the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos (*c.* 1010), in which the author
outlines the steps for conducting siege operations in northern Syria;[7] the second
is the section on military affairs in the *Strategikon* of Kekavmenos (*c.* 1075),
which gives advice on preparing for a siege and relates several campaigns with
lessons for prospective besiegers and defenders.[8] A review and comparison of
these four sources will enable us to see where the theory and practice of
Byzantine siege warfare intersect and to identify the methods and devices which
the Byzantines employed in their siege operations.

We begin with the treatise on siegecraft attributed to Hero of Byzantium. In
the preface, the unknown author states that he has compiled his text mainly from
the poliorcetic manual of Apollodoros (*c.* 100 A.D.), to which he has added
various items from other sources. At the same time, he declares that he has
reiterated the often complex instructions of the classical manuals in a fuller,
clearer style to facilitate the reader's understanding of the construction of the
siege devices presented. Further to this end, he has included diagrams with each
description "in the knowledge that only a well defined drawing can clarify the
murky and inexplicable details of construction."[9] What is striking to observe is
that the diagrams, too, have been reworked in an attempt to render them more
comprehensible to the beholder. Where the siege devices in the ancient treatise

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[4]  The standard survey of classical and Byzantine military writings is by A. Dain, "Les
stratégistes byzantins," *Travaux et mémoires* 2 (1967), 317–92.

[5]  The text used here is that published by C. Wescher in *Poliorcétique des grecs. Traités
théoriques – récits historiques* (Paris, 1867), pp. 197–279, an outdated edition based on
sixteenth-century descendants of the principal witness, the eleventh-century *Vaticanus gr.* 1605.
A new edition and translation, based on the *Vaticanus,* complete with reproductions of the
original diagrams, is in preparation by Dr. Denis Sullivan.

[6]  *Anonymus de obsidione toleranda,* ed. H. van den Berg (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947).

[7]  Ed. J.-A. de Foucault, "Douze chapitres inédits de la *Tactique* de Nicéphore Ouranos,"
*Travaux et mémoires* 5 (1973), 281–312, with French translation. On Ouranos' career and the
military historical interest of his *Taktika,* see E. McGeer, "Tradition and Reality in the *Taktika* of
Nikephoros Ouranos," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991), 129–40.

[8]  Ed. G. G. Litavrin, *Sovety i Rasskazy Kekavmena* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1972), pp. 134–88.

[9]  Wescher, pp. 197[1]–99[10].

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of Apollodoros were illustrated in flat, one-dimensional representations, the Byzantine copies appear in three-dimensional perspective with human figures added for scale.[10] If nothing else, these textual and pictorial elaborations bear witness to the considerable intellectual investment the Byzantines made in their military efforts during the late tenth century – an investment which, in their eyes, was directed to a practical purpose. As the author states in conclusion to his work, commanders who methodically follow his instructions on the assembly and operation of the siege equipment described in the treatise "will capture cities, especially those of Hagar [the Arabs], with ease."[11]

The siegecraft presented are the devices other than artillery which attackers might employ during an assault on the walls. The repertoire includes protective barriers to be set round the siege camp, tortoises, battering rams, scaling ladders and nets, towers and observatories, tools such as augers and bores, and bridges. Of these devices the most important and versatile are the tortoises (*chelonai*), which are shown in various shapes and sizes. The more intricate models resemble wheeled wooden sheds with sharply peaked roofs and fronts to deflect away heavy objects hurled against them; these heavy structures could be rolled up to the walls by men protected behind or inside them. Peaked huts made of wicker or other stout materials served as portable tortoises, while another kind of tortoise was built in the shape of a lean-to which, when placed against the wall, covered the men underneath. There were also large wooden tortoises supporting and sheltering a swinging ram operated by men working from a smaller tortoise set behind the ram-bearing tortoise.[12] The author describes and illustrates these tortoises from the ancient manuals, but he also interpolates into this section of his treatise descriptions and diagrams of a new type of tortoise ("recently devised"), called *laisai*. This Slavic term, which entered Byzantine Greek in the late ninth century, is found in a number of sources from the tenth through eleventh centuries and refers to mantlets made of interwoven vines and branches.[13]

The author goes on to describe how the tortoises in their various shapes were put to several uses, of which the most important was protecting the besiegers as they advanced with their equipment and tools up to the walls. Once at the base of the walls and sheltered by the tortoises, men in the role of sappers could begin tunnelling to collapse a section of the walls or using battering rams and digging tools to open a breach. These methods will be discussed in greater detail below, but the author's emphasis on tunnelling operations is revealing, suggesting, as it does, that in this period the Byzantines did not possess siege artillery powerful enough to shatter the walls of a fortress – an impression confirmed by the other

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[10] Demonstrated by D. Sullivan, "The Reception of Hero of Byzantium in the West and *Vaticanus gr.* 1605," paper read at the XVIth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Hellenic College, Brookline MA, 8–10 November 1991.

[11] Wescher, p. 276[9-17].

[12] Illustrated in Wescher, pp. 211, 215, 218, 228, 259; for the authentic diagrams readers will wish to consult D. Sullivan's forthcoming edition.

[13] On this term, see McGeer, pp. 135–38.

sources – and they therefore relied on this tunnelling technique to take a place by force of arms.

The second poliorcetic manual, the *De obsidione toleranda*, discusses sieges from the perspective of the besieged. A curious text, unfinished and rife with problematic readings, it combines current advice on defensive tactics with recommendations and historical examples derived from ancient sources (Arrian, Polybios, Josephus). Although published in an excellent critical edition nearly fifty years ago, the *De obsidione* has not attracted a great deal of scholarly attention despite the interest of its first section, which issues a fascinating set of instructions to the commander of a town about to be attacked.[14] Opening with the heartening reassurance that "there is no need for the besieged to give up hope, even if the siege threatens to last a long time" (p. 45, ll. 5–6), the anonymous author proceeds to outline the measures essential to conducting a successful defence, occasionally citing historical precedents to justify his advice. The defenders' initial preparations must be to forestall the effects of attrition, starvation, treachery, or carelessness. Once the enemy's intentions have been discerned, the town's inhabitants must gather foodstuffs sufficient to last six months to a year (for distribution by the bishop and other reputable citizens) and evacuate the elderly, children, and the infirm, to reduce the number of mouths to feed. At the same time, they must devastate the surrounding areas to deny provisions to the attackers. Craftsmen skilled in manufacturing armour, weapons, and other useful equipment must be set to work on these items, while the materials necessary for their construction must be stockpiled within the town;[15] the author notes that architects and builders are especially valuable for their ability to repair walls pounded by battering rams. The cisterns and reservoirs must be filled and the water supply strictly rationed. Criminals, a potential source of treachery, should be rounded up and secured, and a system of patrols and counterpatrols maintained to prevent sentries from betraying the town or falling asleep at their stations.

In preparation for the enemy assault, the defenders are advised to increase the height and strength of the walls, and to dig two or three deep, wide trenches around the town. They should also fill these trenches with water and construct a palisade along the inner lip of each one as further obstacles to the besiegers; sharp spikes and caltrops should then be scattered to the outside of the outermost trench. Trebuchets and arrow-shooting instruments are to be set up along the parapets, along with piles of stones, rocks, beams, and logs, with which to bombard the attackers and their tortoises. It is clear from these measures that the defenders were concerned first and foremost with preventing the enemy from reaching the base of the walls and undertaking tunnelling operations, or else

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[14] *De obsidione*, pp. 45[13]–57[3].

[15] On this interesting inventory of the town's craftsmen and the materials needed for their labours, see J. Teall, "Byzantine Urbanism in the Military Handbooks," in *The Medieval City*, eds. H. A. Miskimin, D. Herlihy, A. L. Udovitch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 201–05.

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from bringing rams to bear on certain parts of the fortifications. Conspicuous by its absence, however, is any fear of enemy artillery. Nowhere in this first, most contemporary section of his treatise does the author express the slightest apprehension about the use or effect of artillery against the walls.

A brief survey of these two poliorcetic manuals reveals little innovation in Byzantine siege tactics and technology during the tenth and eleventh centuries, most notably in the development and use of siege artillery. On the other hand, the methods and devices which they emphasize appear to have been the ones most commonly used during this period, to judge from the two treatises written by veteran soldiers. The most immediate and realistic account of siege tactics is given by Nikephoros Ouranos, a distinguished military and intellectual figure who supervised the eastern frontiers of the Byzantine empire while governor of Antioch (999–1010?). Since Ouranos was also a military writer who distilled his experiences of campaigns in northern Syria into a set of precepts regulating the conduct of a siege from beginning to end, Chapter 65 of his *Taktika* proves to be a very useful source in assessing the balance between the theory and actual conduct of Byzantine siege warfare.

As outlined by Ouranos, a siege campaign required careful planning by the general and the coordination of his forces in a series of operations. The opening stages involved raiding and devastating the outposts and areas around the targeted fortress to destroy its supply of food and bring starvation upon the local populace, forcing them to leave; at the same time, the Byzantine commanders along the frontiers were to prevent all traffic from reaching the fortress once the defenders had sent word of their predicament to their fellow Muslims who would then collect and dispatch money and supplies to their brethren in need. This was not the only source of relief to be cut off, however, since even the local Christian population might be induced "in their love of profit" to sell grain, cheese, and flocks to the Muslim garrison "in return for a high price."[16]

Having arrived at the fortress, the Byzantine besiegers were to set up a secure camp. Before embarking on an assault, however, the commander might first seek to entice the garrison into surrendering by offering generous terms, which, if refused, were to be followed by threats of severe reprisals to those choosing to hold out. The Byzantine commander should also threaten all the Armenian and Syriac Christians, as well as apostates to Islam (*magaritai*), inside the walls with execution unless they deserted to the attackers before the fortress fell. Even if unsuccessful, the alternating offers of mercy and threats of retribution were a useful tool "since it causes dissension and disagreement among them, some favouring this, others that, which is of great benefit to us."[17]

Operations against the fortress began with the construction of "the

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[16] De Foucault, p. 297. On the shifting allegiances between the various populations along the eastern fringes of the Byzantine empire, see G. Dagron, "Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'Orient byzantin à la fin du Xe et au XIe siècle: L'immigration syrienne," *Travaux et mémoires* 6 (1976), 177–216.

[17] De Foucault, p. 299.

implements used in siege warfare, *laisai* made from vine-stalks or from bran-
ches of willow or mulberry trees" (p. 299). We have seen that these "recently
devised" mantlets were added to the list of tortoises in Hero of Byzantium;
Ouranos' instructions on their assembly conform closely with their depiction in
the poliorcetic manual. The *laisai* were to be constructed in the shape of a house,
with steep roofs, two entrances, and plaited screens over the front as protection
against enemy projectiles. Light enough to be easily transportable, and spacious
enough for fifteen to twenty men, these mantlets were to be fixed at a distance
of ten or twenty yards from the walls to shelter teams of men as they took turns
fighting and resting through the day. Although Ouranos refers to trebuchets,
these appear to have been used primarily to hurl stones at people rather than
walls and were employed in unison with archers and slingers to keep up a
shower of missiles, which would force the defenders away from the ramparts. To
open a breach in the fortifications, the besiegers pounded the walls with rams
and sledgehammers, but the method which Ouranos deems most effective of all
is tunnelling, an operation which he describes in detail.[18]

Here again, the instructions given by Ouranos are very similar to those in
Hero of Byzantium. Once a suitable place had been located, sappers working
from beneath the *laisai* began digging a tunnel down to the foundations of the
wall. As they progressed, they inserted a series of plaited mats, supported by
wooden posts, to hold the earth over their heads; once at the foundations they
prised the stones loose and replaced them with thick beams to keep the wall
from falling upon them. When they had hollowed out the foundations, they
filled the cavity with dry wood and ignited it so that the fire would consume the
wooden support beams and cause the section of the wall above to collapse.

Ouranos' instructions combine with those in Hero of Byzantium to show that
tunnelling to undermine the foundations was the tactic favoured by the
Byzantines, and the historian Leo the Deacon records its use by Nikephoros
Phokas' army to capture the mighty fortress of Candia during the final conquest
of Crete in 961.[19] Effective as it was, however, tunnelling was a laborious,
time-consuming process. In recognition of this factor, Ouranos advises the
commander to gauge the progress of the siege and offer the garrison the choice
of departing free with their possessions if they surrender the fortress voluntarily,
or enslavement if they continue to resist. The impression conveyed by his advice
is that most sieges were endurance contests in which attrition and the human
element – morale, loyalty, determination – loomed ever larger as the siege wore
on.

The human factor figures even more prominently in Kekavmenos' discussion
of siege tactics. Like the author of the *De obsidione*, Kekavmenos directed his
counsels to the defenders, but he saw siege campaigns (and war generally) as a
contest more of wits than of tactics and technology. In one passage he echoes the

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[18] De Foucault, pp. 299–301.
[19] *Leonis diaconi Caloensis historiae libri decem*, ed. C. B. Hase (Bonn, 1828), pp. 20–21.

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recommendations of the *De obsidione* that the walls be repaired and strengthened, that trebuchets and projectiles be set out along the parapets, and that ditches festooned with traps be dug around the fortress; he also advises digging countertunnels to intercept enemy sappers and gives instructions on how to increase the height of the walls in case the attackers attempt to raise an earthen mound by which to surmount the fortifications.[20] But the handful of episodes which he relates – drawn mainly from the western frontiers of the empire – record tricks and ruses devised by attackers to gain entry to a fortress or lure the commander out into an ambush, and so emphasize the role of deception, treachery, or carelessness over force of arms. In one instance, an enemy feigning friendship sent mules loaded with grain to the unsuspecting commander of an impregnable fortress; once the mule train had passed through the gates, warriors disguised as drivers sprang out and captured the commander and his fortress with him.[21] In another tale, Arab pirates claiming to be traders set up their stations immediately beside the walls of a fortress and bided their time until a rainstorm sent everyone, including most of the sentries, inside their homes, whereupon the Arabs made their way over the walls and captured the town.[22]

It remains now to offer some observations by way of conclusion. This study has concentrated on two objectives: the first to see the relation of theory to practice in the Byzantine treatises on siege warfare, the second to identify the methods which the Byzantines employed in siege operations. It has been seen that the theoretical manuals present a number of methods and devices which, as the soldier's treatises show, were applied in practice; yet where theory and practice intersect is in only the simplest level of technology and tactics. In theory, the repertoire of siegecraft was quite remarkable, but active soldiers made a clear distinction between the realm of ideas and current realities. As Ouranos, steeped in the poliorcetic manuals, declares, "the men of old, in their conduct of siege warfare, constructed many devices such as rams, wooden towers, scaling ladders with various features, as well as tortoises and all kinds of other objects which our generation can hardly imagine . . . many and varied are the means which the men of old contrived for conducting sieges, but I have set down only the methods which our generation currently employs"[23] – which were in fact quite elementary. The sources indicate that Byzantine attackers relied primarily on attrition, ruses, and tunnelling operations to capture a locale; and it is the simplicity of their siege technology – especially in artillery – and the emphasis on ruses and stratagems that emerge from the four sources studied here. The impression remains that in the conduct of siege warfare, as in other military activities, the Byzantines were keener to exploit human weakness than technical devices.

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[20] Litavrin, pp. $178^{12}$–$80^{20}$.
[21] Litavrin, pp. $168^{27}$–$70^{21}$.
[22] Litavrin, pp. $184^{17}$–$86^{16}$.
[23] De Foucault, p. 303.

# Part VII
# Spies and Prisoners of War

# [24]

## Diplomacy and Espionage:
## their role in Byzantine Foreign Relations,
## 8th-10th Centuries.

### NIKE KOUTRAKOU

In an era such as the Middle Ages, which lacks the modern concept of resident ambassadors[1], thus depriving governments of a reliable and constant source of information on foreign lands, peoples, rulers, customs and general activities abroad[2], one has to wonder both about the way of gathering such information and about the means of processing it. The obvious means were, after all, official, that is, diplomatic, contacts –even if embassies and missions were exchanged on an *ad hoc* basis–[3], as well as

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1. M. Canard, "Deux episodes des relations diplomatiques arabo-byzantines au Xe siècle", *Bulletin d' Etudes Orientales de l' Institut Français de Damas* 13, 1949/50,pp. 51-69, esp. p. 52

2. The mid-10th century treatise *De Administrando Imperio,* compiled out of material from imperial archives, offers the most prominent example of "identification sheets" on foreign peoples from Byzantium's point of view. See G. Moravcsik-R. J. H. Jenkins *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio* (henceforth *DAI* and *DAI, Commentary,* Washington 2, 1967.

3. See for instance, the statement of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz to a byzantine ambassador where the Caliph proclaimed that he did not consider it necessary to maintain diplomatic contacts with Byzantium: S. M. Stern, "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz", Byzantion 20, 1950, pp. 239-253, esp. 245-246. See also, Amin Tibi "Byzantine-Fatimid Relations in the Reign of Al-Mu'izz Li Din Allah (R. 953-975 AD) as reflected In Primary Arabic Sources", *Graeco-Arabica* IV, 1991, pp. 91-107, esp. p. 102.

unofficial ones, that is, by making use of persons whose main feature was mobility through foreign lands, such as pilgrims, traders, merchants and, of course, spies.

It must be pointed out, however, that there is a lack of sufficient documentation concerning the relationship between diplomacy and espionage: this can be attributed to the nature of our sources, where such references, when they exist, are sporadic at best. They usually occur in the margin of some diplomatic encounter and they need to be discussed in parallel with an assessment of the political environment in which the relevant diplomatic contact took place. Furthermore, their haphazard character means that any picture to be drawn would by necessity give a rather fragmented view of espionage in diplomatic contacts. Nevertheless those references do allow for some observations as to the links existing between espionage and diplomacy in the middle-byzantine period, on the basis of the lowest common denominator, that is, the seeking and exchange of information, both through official and through unofficial contacts.

Indeed, as far as official contacts are concerned, one has to acknowledge that an ambassador's mobility in a foreign land, was, if not totally restricted, severely hindered. Foreign ambassadors in Byzantium followed definite routes inside the Empire's territory. A «basilicos», an imperial agent, met them at their points of entrance at the frontier and escorted them until the end of their visit. The customary question put to them, as per court protocol, "πῶς διέσωσεν ὑμᾶς ὁ ἀποσταλεὶς βασιλικὸς εἰς διάσωσιν ὑμῶν"[4], which ostensibly referred to their welfare in the Empire, was also a subtle reminder of the fact that they were under constant surveillance, even if they had the possibility of visiting historical monuments and other places of particular interest[5]. This situation made the use of unofficial channels for obtaining and forwarding infor-

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4. J. J. Reiske, *Constantini Porphyrogeniti impertatoris de Cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, CSHB, Bonn 1829-30, ( =A. Vogt, *Constantin VII Porphyrogenete, Le Livre des Ceremonies*, I-II, Paris 1935-40), henceforth, *De Cerimoniis*, II 47, p. 683/14.

5. An example is that of the ambassadors sent by the Caliph Al Wathiq to Michael III, who visited the Cavern of the Seven Sleepers in Ephesus. See M. Canard, "Les relations politiques et sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*,(DOP) XVIII, 1964, pp. 33-56.

mation, a necessity in the area of foreign relations.

After all, these unofficial channels were not something unusual. In fact, the concept of "spy" was not foreign to Byzantine mentality. Quite the contrary. The Empire often employed what we could call "special agents" in order to carry out difficult missions. Their primary task was set in a military context. Their role, especially in guerrilla operations, where they acted both as spies transmitting information on the enemy forces and movements[6] and as commando units which, disguised as peasants, ambushed the enemy army[7], is highlighted in Byzantine military treatises. Byzantine strategists often stressed that a general bringing his army into an enemy land, had to send out spies "κατάσκοποι" or "χονσάριοι"[8], either one by one, or in groups (the latter called "συνοδικοί")[9], in order to gather information about the enemy. Histories and chronicles also refer to the use of spies in war, portraying the concept of espionage as a military necessity. For example, according to the chronicler Leo Diaconus, Nicephorus Phocas in his Cretan expedition used a military corps in order to study (the Greek text uses the operative words "ἐπί κατασκοπήν", «in order to spy») the enemy's strength and movements and to harass the enemy army[10].

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6. G. Dagron-H. Mihaescu, *Le traité sur la guerilla de l' empereur Nicéphore Phocas*, Paris 1986, (henceforth, Dagron-Mihaescu, *guerilla*), I-II,VII, XXI, pp. 36-41, 50, 118ff.
7. G. Dagron-H. Mihaescu, *guerilla*, XVIII, pp. 102-107. See also G. Dagron, "Guerilla, places fortes et villages ouverts à la frontière orientale de Byzance vers 950 AD", *CASTRUM 3, Fortification et habitat dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Age* (Colloque organisé par la Casa de Velasquez et l' Ecole française de Rome, Madrid 24-27/ 11/1985), pp. 43-48, esp. p. 47.
8. B. Wassiliewsky-V. Jernstedt, *Cecaumeni Strategicon et incerti scriptoris de officiis regiis libellus*, (henceforth *Cecaumenos*), Petropoli 1896, (reprinted Amsterdam 1965), 24, p. 9. H. G.Beck, *Kekaumenos, Vademecum des Byzantinischen Aristokraten. Das sogenannte Strategikon des Kekaumenos*, (henceforth Beck, *Kekaumenos*) übersetzt, eingeleitet und erklärt von H. G. Beck, Graz-Wien-Koln 1956, p. 32, n. 20.
9. *Cecaumenos*, 26, p. 9. Beck, *Kekaumenos*, p. 33.
10. C. B. Hase, *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, (CSHB)*, Bon 1828, (henceforth *Leo Diaconus*), p. 9/3-4: "ἐπὶ καταδρομὴν καὶ κατασκοπὴν τῆς νήσου ἐστέλλετο". *Ibid.*, p. 12/24: "οἱ προκατασκοπεῖν σταλέντες τῆς χώρας". The necessity of a well-organised military intelligence was even more evident in

This type of "special agent" could also, depending on the circumstances, play a role in foreign relations. The example of the agents sent by emperor Constantine V to Bulgaria in 764 AD, in order to dispose of two Bulgarian border leaders and thus put a stop to their raiding of Byzantine western provinces, such as Thrace[11], is a typical one. It stresses the Empire's willingness to use spies in secret operations, that is, use clandestine means in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Furthermore the fact that the Byzantines made their move under the cover of a «seeming peace», a «false peace». ("το δοκεῖν εἰρήνην" or "ἀπατηλὴν εἰρήνην"[12], according to the chronicler) suggests a subterfuge which included the peace negotiations. After all, the use of "special agents" in byzantine internal affairs was anything but rare or ineffective, as demonstrated by the success of Michael II's agents who, through promises and bribes, persuaded some lower-rank partisans of Thomas the Slavonian to trick their fellow rebels and hand over their strongholds of Saniana and Kavala to the imperial troops.[13] Another, more blatant example of espionage in politics can be found in the case of a certain Michael and his partner Ann, a "βασιλικὴ"

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naval warfare. Byzantines and Arabs followed each other's fleet preparations through spies, who notified their respective headquarters of the movements of enemy ships using various techniques and devices such as smoke signals, beacons etc. See V. Christides, "Two Parallel Naval Guides of the Tenth Century: Qudāma's Document and Leo VI' Naumachica: a Study on Byzantine and Moslem Naval Preparedness", *Graeco-Arabica* I, 1982, pp. 51-103, esp. pp. 89-91.

11. *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. J. Classen, *Theophanis Chronographia, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (CSHB)* (henceforth *Theophanes*), Bonn 1839, p. 673: "καὶ ἀποστείλας ὁ βασιλεὺς λάθρα εἰς Βουλγαρίαν ἐπίασεν τὸν Σέβερον ἄρχοντα Σκλαβουνῶν τὸν πολλὰ κακὰ ἐν τῇ Θράκῃ ποιήσαντα. Κατεσχέθη δὲ καὶ Χριστῖνος... καὶ πρῶτος τῶν Σκαμάρων..."

12. *Theophanes*, p. 673/12 and 674/3. This operation inside the Bulgarian borders was both an intimidation operation and a security operation as far as the Byzantine Thracian provinces were concerned. At the same time it served to undermine the Bulgarian border defense system, a prerequisite for the following year's Byzantine campaign against Bulgaria. See E. Κυριάκη, *Βυζάντιο καὶ Βούλγαροι (7ος-10ος αι.). Συμβολὴ στην εξωτερικὴ πολιτικὴ τοῦ Βυζαντίου*, Athens 1993, p. 87 and ns. 68-70.

13. *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB*, (henceforth *Theophanes Continuatus*), Bonn 1838, p. 72. According to the chronicler, those won over the imperial cause waited till most of Thomas' sympathisers were outside the walls and then they closed the gates

(imperial agent), during the power struggle between Leo Phocas and Romanus Lecapenus in the minority years of Constantine Porphyrogenitus: they infiltrated the camp of Phocas and distributed to his followers documents signed by Romanus as the official representative of the young emperor, which refuted Phocas' claim that his rebellion was for the emperor's protection.[14]

Furthermore, there are references to spies linked with everyday byzantine life. Many such casual references occur in popular hagiographical texts. Indeed, a number of saints, holy hermits and other «out of the ordinary» individuals had been mistaken for spies and treated accordingly by byzantine citizens. St. Gregory the Decapolite who risked the mob's wrath in Otranto[15] and St. Elias the Younger in Vouthrotos, who had to answer to the accusation of being a spy on behalf of an Agarene fleet nearby, levelled against him by a local official[16], are the most prominent cases.

Those saints, holy men of renown and wandering pilgrims, provided after all, ideal cover for unofficial contacts. They had legitimate reason to travel, (pilgrimage, visits to monastic communities or even the openly expressed desire to go in search of a hermitage and divine inspiration);

on them, leaving them to face the imperial troops. It is amusing to note however that the information on the imperial promises granted to them in case of surrender were passed over in a musical guise, in the form of a song sung outside the walls and pitched in such a way as to carry the message to them.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 395

15. F. Dvornik, *La Vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IXe siècle*, Paris 1926, p. 58: "ὡς ἐπὶ προδοσίαν χριστιανῶν ἥκειν τὸν ἅγιον ἐπεκάλουν". He was probably mistaken for an Arab spy, to judge by the oriental headdress forced on him. See C. Mango "The Life of St. Gregory the Decapolite" *Βυζαντινά* 13/1, 1985, pp. 633-646, esp. p. 637. For a discussion of the saints peregrinations at the time, who could, after all easily arouse suspicions since they usually visited the Holy Land and came back through various itineraries, see also E. Malamut, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Paris 1993, pp. 290-291.

16. G. Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant'Elia il Giovane*, Palermo 1962, p. 43: "σκληροῖς γὰρ κατ' αὐτῶν ἐχρήσατο λόγοις, Ἀγαρηνοὺς αὐτοὺς καὶ βεβήλους αποκαλῶν καὶ κατασκόπους τῶν πόλεων". See also G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saints de Sicile et d' Italie méridionale aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles", *Byzantion* 29, 1959, pp. 89-173, esp. p. 101.

they were respected as holy persons and their movements went more or less unchecked. In some cases, there is also reason to suspect that apart from any incidental information gathered during their wanderings (news, local gossip etc.), they also had ties and contacts inside foreign lands – probably as a result of those travels– and could be informed of developments elsewhere. St. Paul the Younger of Latros, a regular correspondent of emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus according to his biographer[17], offers such an example. He is reported as an occasional consultant on matters of foreign relations, who twice predicted that the emperor's dealings with the Arabs would not come to a fortunate conclusion. The first time he predicted the defeat of the Cretan expedition of 949[18], the second the refusal of the hamdanide ruler Sayf ad Dawla to accept a truce and an exchange of prisoners offered by the Empire[19]. Given the fact that the saint's "Life" also stresses his renown in foreign lands –he was famous, namely to the Cretan Arabs and the "Scythians" i.e. probably the Bulgarians or even the Russians[20]– and his active correspondence with foreign potentates[21], one has to wonder about the true meaning of this prophecy. Even allowing for literary exaggeration that accumulates ex eventu predictions, in this case, when the saint presents his prophecy to the emperor on his demand, it could well be a thought-out extrapolation based on solid knowledge of facts gathered through unofficial contacts. After all, even a sedentary saint could easily be a recipient and processor of information brought by visiting monks and disciples and Paul of Latros was always surrounded by them.

At the same time, the fact that travelling monks and pilgrims could be used not only as gatherers of information but also as active agents in

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17. "Vita S. Pauli Junioris", *Analecta Bollandiana* 11, 1892, pp. 19-74, 136-181, esp. p. 72.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 74. This abortive exchange of prisoners, which was to be conducted on behalf of the Empire by Basil the Rhodian, has been dated by Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* II, (French edition by H. Grégoire and M. Canard I-II, Brussels 1935-50) pp. 347-348, to 953 AD.

20. *Vita S. Pauli Junioris*, op. cit.p. 71.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

secret operations, is well illustrated in the story of a monk named Aga-
pios of Mt. Kyminas who, as stated in the *De Administrando Imperio,*
served as the go-between, passing along messages which resulted in the
annexation of the town of Ardanoutzin, "the key to Iberia" by the Em-
pire[22]. This could also happen without the genuine pilgrim's knowledge.
Thus, according to a legendary version of John the Grammarian's em-
bassy to Baghdad, John is supposed to have taken advantage of a group
of Iberian pilgrims to the Holy Land, posing under disguise as one of
them, in order to make contact –disguised as a mendicant– on behalf of
emperor Theophilus with general Manuel who, under suspicion of con-
spiracy, had sought refuge with the Arabs[23]. This version seems like stuff
out of a piece of «gothic literature» and one can safely assume that it
owes its existence to one of the several rumours surrounding the contro-
versial figure of John the Grammarian, scholar turned diplomat and lat-
er to become the last iconoclast patriarch.[24] Nevertheless, all the ver-
sions assert some contact or other with Manuel[25] and the cover provided
by pilgrims is taken for granted.

In any case, the fact that saints, monks and pilgrims who travelled
around, in and out of Byzantine lands, often encountered a suspicious, if
not openly hostile attitude on the part of Byzantine authorities, argues
for a fear of spies –justified after all– rising almost to the point of para-

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22. *DAI* 46/42ff. *DAI, Commentary,* p. 179. See also T. Λουγγής, *Κωνσταντίνου Ζ.*
*Πορφυρογέννητου DE ADMINISTRANDO IMPERIO, μία μέθοδος ανάγνωσης,* Thessa-
lonica 1990, pp. 117-118.
23. *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 119/12-19.
24. On John the Grammarian see P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin,* Paris,
1971, pp. 135-147; also L. Bréhier, "Un patriarche sorcier à Constantinople", *Revue de l'*
*Orient chrétien* 9, pp. 261-268.
25. According to another version, this contact took place while John was in Baghdad on
an embassy for an exchange of prisoners. See *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 119/8-12. See
also the Continuation of George the Monk, ed. I. Bekker, *Georgius Monachus Continua-*
*tus, CSHB,* Bonn 1838, p. 797, which insists on the secret character of the meeting: "λάθρα
συνομιλῆσαι τῷ Μανουήλ". For a discussion of Manuel's case, see A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance*
*et les Arabes* (French edition by H. Grégoire and M. Canard, I-II, with translation of
extracts from Arabic writers, Brussels 1935-1950, henceforth Vasiliev, *Byzance et les*
*Arabes*),I, *La dynastie d' Amorium,* pp. 112-113 and 413-417.

noia and characteristic of troubled times and constant wars.[26] It also
argues for a spy network where an itinerant traveller on legitimate busi-
ness provided excellent cover, as well as for a counter-espionage capa-
bility. This is further attested by the case of an Arab Syrian spy during
the reign of Basil I, who according to the chronicler came to Byzantium
in order to ascertain the Empire's state of naval forces and to evaluate
the success of an eventual attack by the Arab fleet. Although he was
discovered, he was not exposed, but led to see the Empire's fleet in total
readiness, which drove him to report in favour of cancelling the attack.[27].
The only problem with this system is that although it tends to see spies
under every tree, it cannot always ascertain who they are and what exactly
their purpose is, and we can safely assume that in this case the Syrian
spy was probably not the only one in the region.

   Thus, in the field of foreign relations, espionage was almost a duty. A
10th-century Byzantine military treatise, dated in the years 930-950 AD[28],
explicitly states that, in case of the Emperor's absence from the capital,
one of the duties of his appointed representative was to «guard against
sudden attacks by the enemy in particular, and in this connection (he) was
constantly to write and receive reports from the border *themes,* and to
keep an eye on neighbouring hostile peoples, to learn and to report».[29]
This suggests an information relay system, in which the Emperor kept a
personal interest, since he was the final receiver of those reports, and in
which all information, filtered through envoys' contacts, was included.

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26. A provision in islamic law which provided that an underage spy should be sentenced
to slavery, indicates that this fear of espionage was not limited on one side of the frontier.
See Shayabani, *M. Siyar al Kabirah*, Cairo 1960, t. IV, p. 226, cited by Khouri al Odetel-
lah, "Ἄραβες καὶ Βυζαντινοί. Τὸ πρόβλημα τῶν αἰχμαλώτων πολέμου", Thessalonica,
1983, p. 26.
27. *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 308-309. F. Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services*
(The ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the
Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy), henceforth Dvornik *Intelligence,* New Brunswick 1974,
pp. 147-148, dates the incident to 880 AD.
28. J. Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expe-
ditions, CFHB,* Wien 1990, pp. 45-53, dates the relevant text to 930-950 AD.
29. *Ibid.,* p. 86: «καὶ δέχεσθαι ἐκ τῶν ἄκρων θεμάτων καὶ κατασκοπεῖν τὰ τῶν γειτόνων
ἐχθρῶν καὶ μανθάνειν καὶ ἀναδιδάσκειν».

After all, during official contacts the envoys themselves –regardless of moving restrictions– could obtain information on the overall situation of the country they were in. The «Bulgarian friends» for instance, that is, the Bulgarian envoys who visited Constantinople regularly during the last part of the 9th and 10th centuries[30], having even their own definite places in court ceremonies during the Christmas, New Year and Easter festivities[31], could in all probability obtain some first-hand information, either through observation or through court gossip, and in any case acquire a small part of an insider's view of court politics. In a similar way, the Empire's annual mission to the Pechenegs could always bring back updated information as to the steppe's peoples[32]. Even embassies for protocol purposes, that is, in order to announce important events such as an accession to the throne –as Theophilus did following the ancient custom according to the chronicler[33]– or a victory[34], could add to the gathering of information. Although willing disinformation and misleading information were well within the normal parameters of diplomatic contacts[35], the envoys could at least observe first hand how things stood. They could also witness important events such as the overthrow of Irene by Nicephorus I in 802 AD, which took place during the stay of Charlemagne's envoys in Constantinople where they arrived for the negotiations of a marriage treaty with Irene[36].

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30. J. Shepard, "Byzantine Diplomacy 800-1204: means and ends" in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, eds. J. Shepard and S. Franklin (henceforth Shepard, *Diplomacy*), London 1992, pp. 41-71, esp. p. 54 and n. 49.

31. N. Oikonomides, *La liste des préséances byzantines de 9e et 10e siècles*, Paris 1972, pp. 171, 181, 185, 203, 207, 209.

32. *DAI* I/15, p. 48.

33. *Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 95/18-22: "ἐπεὶ δὲ παλαιῷ ἔθει ἑπόμενος ἐβούλετο τοῖς Ἄγαρ τὰ τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας ποιῆσαι κατάδηλα, εἴτε δὴ κοινωνοὺς εὐφροσύνης λαμβάνων, εἴτε μᾶλλον τῷ φοβερὸς μέλλειν ὁρᾶσθαι αὐτοῖς..."

34. For a classification of embassies according to their aims and purposes see E. Chrysos "Byzantine Diplomacy AD 300-800: means and ends" in Shepard, *Diplomacy*, pp. 25-39, esp. p. 32 and n. 31.

35. J. Shepard, "Information, Disinformation and Delay in Byzantine Diplomacy", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 10, 1985, pp. 233-239, (henceforth Shepard, *Information*), esp. pp. 259, 275.

36. *Theophanes*, p. 742/17-18: "ὄντων ἀκμὴν τῶν ἀποκρισιαρίων Καρούλου καὶ ὁρόντων τὰ πραττόμενα"

It must be noted however that the communication of the information was not one-sided. The envoys also provided information –even inadvertently through their customs, appearance, speech, or even a less guarded tongue[37]– on their patron and their people, thus contributing to the creation of their people's image in the host country. At the same time, they provided an ideal contact point for passing over information gathered through other means, such as local contacts. After all any information can be useful only when it is communicated in time and official contacts, such as embassies and missions, provided a meeting point and a safer channel for the communication of information which might otherwise require a longer route and a messenger. On the other hand, the restrictions and security precautions that surrounded foreign envoys, were a necessity in order to eliminate or at least minimize the number of unofficial contacts. However, the sender took measures to render such contacts as effective as possible, as ascertained by the fact that envoys were often chosen among administrators and officers with previous knowledge of the peoples they were sent to. The missions of Kamateros Petronas, sent by emperor Theophilus to Cherson because he judged him «wise in the ways of the region»[38] or of the Chersonese Kalokyris, the patrician sent in 967 by Nicephorus Phocas to instigate a Russian intervention in the Balkans against the Bulgarians[39], are apt illustrations of such practices. The above mentioned Kalokyris, for example, was the son of the *proteuon* of Cherson whose long-standing ties with the Russians are well known[40]. It is logical

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37. Indeed, envoys when involved into discussions and debates could be tricked into revealing more than they should. The rather smug comments of Caliph Al-Mu'izz on a Byzantine ambassador, who during a discussion for which he was not prepared, let the Arabs guess at the Empire's intentions concerning its relations with the independent Arab emirats of Syria, are significant on this matter. See S. M. Stern "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz", *Byzantion* 20, 1950, pp. 239-253, esp. p. 249.

38. *Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 123: "ὡς ἔμπειρον κρίνας τοῦ τόπου..."

39. *Leo Diaconus,* IV 6, p. 63; *Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis Historiarum Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, CFHB,* Series Berolinensis, ed. H. G. Beck-A. Kambylis-R. Keydell, Berlin 1973, (henceforth *Skylitzes,* p. 277.

40. A. A. Vasiliev, "Economic relations between Byzantium and old Russia", *Journal of*

that such an envoy, endowed with previous knowledge of the people and the ruler he was sent to[41] would also have some contacts within the local population. So, the fact that the ambassadors were often chosen among people with ties in the region they were sent to, provides an indication as to how information was gathered from local sources, as well as to its transmission by taking advantage of diplomatic contacts.

These relations developed at a local level on both sides of the frontiers, useful for trade and information as they might be, presented also a danger: they could foster contacts seeking support in order to supplant central authority. Contacts between powerful local administrators and foreign governments were not rare during the period under discussion. Byzantine border generals, for instance, often entered negotiations with the Arabs, especially on the subject of truces and prisoner exchanges[42], without previous clearance from the capital. Their involvement was sometimes suspect. For example, during the reign of Irene, Tatzatzes, former general of the *theme* of Boukellarii, manoeuvred, through his dealings with the Arabs, the Byzantine side into a truce[43]. In the same way the allegations of

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*Economic and Business History* IV, n. 12, 1932, p. 320; *DAI, Commentary*, pp. 16-61; G. Vernadsky, "The Russ in the Crimea and the Treaty of 945", *Byzantina-Metabyzantina* II, p. 249f. On the possibility of the Chersonites' performing services for the Empire in the form of gathering information, see J. Shepard, *Information*, p. 274.

41. See for instance the case of patrician Kosmas of Thessalonica, who was put in charge of an embassy to Italy, specifically because he was an acquaintance of king Landolf: I. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus, CSHB*, Bonn 1839, II, p. 355: "γνώριμος ὤν τῷ Δανδούλφῳ".

42. These negotiations usually involved exchanges of prisoners which could be unofficial and conducted in a summary way, that is, without elaborate protocol, although following some simple rules of procedure (that is, equivalence of respective prisoners, the manner they were exchanged etc.) This was due both to the military nature of such negotiations and to time constraints. Of course, border commanders could also be charged with carrying out formal exchanges of prisoners, already negotiated through embassies between the central authorities. See Khouri al Odetallah Ἄραβες καὶ Βυζαντινοί. Τὸ πρόβλημα τῶν αἰχμαλώτων πολέμου, Thessalonica 1983, pp. 67-98. On Byzantine ideas concerning prisoners of war, see also, D. Letsios, "Die Kriegsgefangenschaft nach Auffassung der Byzantiner" *Byzantinoslavica* 53/2, 1992, pp. 213-217.

43. *Theophanes*, p. 706. Those contacts could be initiated by either party and span a considerable amount of time. For instance, according to the same chronicler, (*Theophanes*, pp. 593-599) in the beginning of the 8th century, Leo (later emperor Leo III), general

the chronicler Theophanes concerning general Michael Lachanodrakon, one of the most loyal supporters of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V, according to which the general was bribed by the Arabs in order to abandon an expedition against them, substantiate –regardless of their veracity–[44], the principle of contacts between foreign powers and officers holding fairly senior posts in Byzantine provincial administration. Also the contacts of the governors of Sicily with their neighbours, especially the African Arabs, without the expressive permission of Constantinople[45], are a well known fact. Taking those contacts a step further, the Sicilian generals tended to turn to the Arabs for support in their rebellions, as Elpidius did in 781 AD[46]. In the case of another Sicilian rebel, Euphemius, his rebellion (821-826 AD) in the first uncertain years of Michael II's reign, and his negotiations with the Arabs opened the way for the Arab conquest of Sicily[47]. Of course, this local diplomacy and the establishing of local contacts were allowed despite the evident dangers to central authorities, for the sake of expediency and in order to provide specific answers to specific problems within a restricted timescale. It also prepared the way for more official diplomatic contacts between central authorities.

In this context, although casual references to ambassadors seeking information and to spies, supplying or transmitting it, indicate an interrela-

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of the Anatolikon *theme,* appointed by emperor Artemius-Anastasius II (713-715 AD), maintained secret contacts with the Arabs during his entire struggle against Theodosius III and his rise to imperial power. He managed thus, through a combination of luck and guile, -especially in his dealings with Maslama, brother to the Umayyad Caliph Sulayman who sought to make him into a puppet emperor- to keep Amorium in Byzantine hands and reduce the effects of the Arab raids on some parts of the eastern provinces, at least until the Arab siege of Constantinople (summer 717 AD). See H. Ahrweiler, "L' Asie Mineure et les invasions arabes (VII-IX siècles)", *Revue Historique* CCXXVII, 1962, pp. 1-32.

44. *Ibid.,* p. 698. There is always the possibility that these accounts of contacts have been exaggerated by the internal political propaganda against iconoclasts, such as general Lachanodrakon, which was at work at the time of the writing of the chronicle (beginning of 9th Century).

45. J.Gay, *L' Italie méridionale et l' empire byzantin depuis l' avènement de Basile Ier jusqu' à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867-1071),* Paris 1904, p. 15.

46. *Theophanes,* p. 705; J. Gay, *op. cit.,* p. 15.

47. *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 82; J. Gay, *op. cit.,* p. 16.

tionship and even a linkage between the two, the circumstances concerning embassy contacts are not always clear. The role of espionage in formal diplomatic relations is more inferred than referred to. Usually, accounts of espionage were recorded years after the event and without details that could help our comprehension. Nevertheless, there are explicit references to envoys seeking information by use of unofficial contacts.

Byzantine sources offer a very suggestive term for those unofficial contacts: "κρυπτοὶ φίλοι"[48], literally «secret friends»; the semantic parallel drawn as to the word "φίλοι"[49], meaning ambassadors, is both clear and logical. It underlines the link that stems in both cases from their value to the Empire as sources of (official and unofficial) reliable information and as agents –even undercover ones in the second case– in foreign politics. The examples listed in the sources are numerous and the story of the trick that the Bulgarian ruler Telerig played upon Constantine V in 775 AD, in order to discover Byzantine supporters and spies in Bulgaria[50], makes for interesting reading.

Also, in Muslim territories, the contacts consisted primarily in Christian residents. The most notable example is that of Patriarch Theodore of Antioch who was accused in 757 "ὅτι συχνῶς τῷ βασιλεῖ Κωνσταντίνῳ

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48. The Emperor received word about the Bulgarian preparations and intentions concerning the region of Verzitia by his "secret friends": see *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 691/18 "ἐδέξατο μανδάτον ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀπὸ Βουλγαρίας ἐκ τῶν κρυπτῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ". According to M. Nystazopoulou-Pelecidou, *Οι Βαλκανικοί λαοί κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους,* Thessalonica 1992, p. 106, these «secret friends» were members of an information network organised in Bulgaria by emperor Constantine V in the framework of his overall policy of support towards the pro-Byzantine party of Bulgaria at the time. On the Verzitia expedition, see Αικ. Χριστοφιλοπούλου, *Βυζαντινή Ιστορία,* Β1, Thessalonica, 1993, p. 128. See also Ε. Κυριάκη, *Βυζάντιο και Βούλγαροι,* op. cit., p. 90, who stresses the existence of these "secret friends" as an indication both of a prolonged power-crisis in Bulgaria and of the importance of Byzantine influence on Bulgarian political personalities of the time.

49. The term "φίλοι", literally "friends", was used as a technical term in order to designate ambassadors and envoys. See, for example, *De Ceremoniis* II 47, pp. 683 "ἀπὸ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῶν Ρωμαίων ἀπιόντας φίλους" or *DAI* I 21, p. 48 concerning the Pecheneg "friends" accompanying the Byzantine ambassador on his return.

50. *Theophanes Continuatus,* p. 693. See F. Dvornik, *Intelligence,* p. 147.

δηλοποιεῖ τὰ τῶν Ἀράϐων διὰ γραμμάτων" [51] of passing information
on the events in Arab lands to emperor Constantine V. Of course, it could
be that the Patriarch limited himself to the account of events that were
not secret at all and could probably be obtained through other sources
such as traders and pilgrims. But he could also bring the appreciation of
a high ranking church official as to events such as the power struggle
among the Arab leaders of the time and one can understand the Arabs'
taking exception to his passing that kind of information to Byzantium.
Judging by the Empire's successes at the time, the Arabs' accusations
might hold a grain of truth. In any case this enabled the Arabs to dispose
of a high ranking possible Byzantine contact. Also the fact that many
Byzantine embassies (especially to the Arabs during the 8th-10th centu-
ries) had as aim to stop possible raids is significant in itself. It points
towards information received through unofficial channels as to the ene-
my's preparations. The raid, were it to finally take place, usually did not
come as a surprise, "ἡ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν ἔφοδος οὐκ ἀπροσδόκητος οὖσα",[52]
as a Byzantine ambassador described it. The same applies to informa-
tion concerning possible foreign intervention in Byzantine affairs as in
the case of an eventual Arab support to the rebellion of Constantine
Doukas in 913. A Byzantine defector, a certain Nicholas ex tax-collec-
tor who had crossed over to the Arabs, informed the Byzantines by a
coded message that there would be no Arab support of the Doukas cause,
thus enabling them to plan ahead against him, free of international com-
plications[53]. Also, a coded message, apart from the will to secure the
secrecy and security of the information, implies an espionage organisa-
tion which gives credit to the hypothesis that the said Nicholas was in
fact a planted spy.

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51. *Theophanes,* p. 663. According to Dvornik, *Intelligence,* p. 147, some of the Patri-
arch's correspondence must have been seized by the Arabs and raised suspicions that
made his subsequent exile necessary.
52. Symeon Magistros in a letter to Nicetas of Smyrna dated to 964 AD. See J. Darrouzès,
*Epistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle,* Paris 1960, letter n. 89, p. 150.
53. *Theophanes Continuatus,* pp. 383-384. The message was written in arabic, on a black
cloth, which the interpreter Manuel had to pass through water in order to be able to read.
Dvornik, *Intelligence,* p. 148-149.

On the other hand there are also references to envoys, who while seeking information did not limit themselves only to what those unofficial contacts could provide, but played a more active role, lending themselves to covert operations which sometimes had little or nothing to do with their ambassadorial status.

Frequently, apart from their official mission, envoys had to implement a second, less avowed one. This could mean, for instance, more negotiations in the context of "secret diplomacy". We have already mentioned the kind of contacts that a provincial general could maintain with foreign rulers[54], and which could also lead to secret negotiations with repercussions on the Empire as a whole. But secret contacts between governments were also a possibility, as in the case of the Bulgarian ruler Omourtag whose secret envoys to Michael II offered him Bulgarian aid against the rebel Thomas[55]. There are some contradictions in the chronicler's account of this event as to whether the offer of assistance came from the Bulgarian side spontaneously (as the Continuation of Theophanes insists –probably somewhat excessively– on the "αὐτομάτω

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54. Contacts between central governments and dissidents on the other side of the frontier were commonplace for the Empire and its neighbours, since no foreign policy could ignore the leverage they provided. Consequently, when dissident opinions found a more pronounced expression in open, armed revolt, negotiations to assure the foreign power's (usually the Arabs') help, or at least neutrality, necessarily followed. Such was the case of Leo (later Leo III) general of the Anatolikon *theme* against Theodosius III (see n. 43 above), or the case of Thomas the Slavonian against Leo V and Michael II (*Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 54; for a discussion of the Arab aid to Thomas in terms of political and military support, see H. Kopstein, "L' usurpateur byzantin Thomas et les Arabes" *Graeco-Arabica* IV, 1991, pp. 127-140). On the other hand, the Empire followed the same principle in order to maintain passive support, which in case of war could be transformed into campaigns of diversion. So, Theophilus' secret dealings with Babek -even if the initiative of those contacts belonged to Babek as stated by Tabari- who had rebelled first against Al Ma'mun and later against Al Mu'tasim, kept the Chaliph's troops engaged, thus providing a very useful diversion for Theophilus' Zapetra campaign in 837 AD. (See Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I, pp. 137, 293.).

55. The secret contacts between Omourtag of Bulgaria and emperor Michael II during the revolt of Thomas offer one of the best examples of this "secret diplomacy". See *Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 64: «...Μορτάγων ὁ τῶν Βουλγάρων βασιλεύς... λάθρα τινὰς ἐς βασιλέα πέμψας ἐξαποστεῖλαι αὐτομάτω γνώμη συμμαχίαν καθυπισχνεῖτο...»

γνώμη" of the Bulgarian king) or was an answer to Michael II's request for help[56]. There is unanimity in the sources, however, as to the secrecy of the negotiations and the Bulgarian intervention against Thomas.

These secret contacts often prepared more formal, diplomatic ones, as in the case of a monk by the name of Kalokyris sent by Peter of Bulgaria on a preparatory mission, before the actual negotiations for the treaty and marriage alliance of 927 AD took place[57]. In this context of secret diplomacy and unofficial contacts, there is another possibility that must be taken into account: the role of exiles, and even of captives in position of trust, as possible contacts and sources of information. The Arab Samonas, for instance, counsellor and *parakoimomenos* of emperor Leo the Wise, stopped an imperial message of safe-conduct to the rebel Andronic Doukas, thus ensuring that he remained on the Arab side[58]. Samonas had also, according to the chronicler, a discussion with his father when the latter came to Constantinople as an envoy from Tarsus and apprised him of his intentions to flee back to the Arabs[59]. In the same way a Byzantine captive, a monk by the name of Theodore Koupharas, was said to have been instrumental in the Bulgarian conversion to Christianity, for he prepared the Bulgarian king Boris-Michael for his subsequent acceptance of it (ca 864 AD). The fact that empress-regent Theodora initiated a search for this monk and finally exchanged him with a sister of Boris who was held in

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56. *Georgius Monachus Continuatus, CSHB*, Bonn 1838, p. 788/24-25: "ὡς ὁ βασιλεὺς Μιχαὴλ τοὺς Βουλγάρους εἰς συμμαχίαν κατ' αὐτοῦ προσεκαλέσατο...". Many scholars think that this is a truer account of events (see P. Lemerle, "Thomas le Slave", *Travaux et Mémoires*, I, 1965, pp. 255-297, esp. pp. 279-281), since it was Michael who was in need of help, and that the *Theophanes Continuatus'* account has been tampered with for reasons of state propaganda. E. Κυριάκης, Βυζάντιο καὶ Βούλγαροι, op. cit., pp. 125-126 and ns. 169-170, in summing up the question, believes that this offer was a Bulgarian initiative. He stresses the fact that even when the alliance offer was not accepted, the Bulgarians carried out their campaign against Thomas and, when they were satisfied with their booty, turned back without further contact with the Byzantine emperor. In any case, the fact is certain that there had been secret negotiations between Michael II and Omourtag on the possibility of a Bulgarian intervention against the rebel Thomas.
57. *Theophanes Continuatus*, p. 412.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

Constantinople is significant of Koupharas' value for Byzantium and it seems that his real role in Boris' court needs to be historically re-evaluated[60].

Furthermore, there were embassies with other purposes than their ostensible aims and where "unofficial" contacts and gathering of information were the essential ingredients. Thus, the Byzantine embassy to Cordoba in 949 AD, contemporaneous to the expedition to Crete, was suspected (by the Arabs) as having come in order to spy on the Spanish Arabs' attitude towards their Cretan brethren and determine whether the Arabs would intervene in support of the Cretan Arabs in the upcoming conflict[61].

Another well-known example is that of the embassy in Baghdad in 905/907 AD, where ambassador Leo Choerosphactes had contacts and possibly even a meeting with the rebel Andronic Doucas[62]. The rather suggestive term "παραπρεσβεία", «false embassy»[63], given to these contacts implies a certain degree of illegality which is significant as to their ambivalence: if discovered, they could easily be disowned by the central authorities.

Furthermore, in some cases the linkage between envoys and spies ope-

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60. *Ibid,* p. 162-163. The search for Koupharas and his subsequent exchange can also provide an explanation for the rather unknown mission of an official named Vryainios, later a patrician, to Bulgaria. According to the "Life of St. Evaristus" (ed. S. Van de Vorst, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 41, 1923, pp. 288-325, esp. 301/13: "πρὸς τούτους –that is, the Bulgarians– ὁ περίδοξος ἐκεῖνος Βρυαίνιος παρὰ Θεοδώρας τῆς εὐσεβοῦς βασιλίδος πρέσβις (sic) ἐξαποστέλλεται."). Vryainios was sent by empress Theodora as an ambassador to the Bulgarians. The Saint's "Life" does not offer a reason for this embassy and the chronicles have no mention of it. So, the search for and, later on, the exchange of Koupharas,provides a probable reason for this embassy, especially when no name of the ambassador charged with it is given in the chronicles. Furthermore, the search and gathering of information on Koupharas, would also account for the leisurely pace of Vryainios' mission, which enabled the young saint Evaristus, who followed in the ambassador's train, to join the holy men of the region: see the "Life of Saint Evaristus", *op. cit.,* p. 301-302.

61. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* II, p. 331.

62. G. Kolias, *Léon Choerosphactès, magistre, proconsul et patrice,* Athens 1939, (henceforth Kolias, *Leo Choerosphactes*), p. 47. n. 2, p. 48, p. 55; R. J. Jenkins, "Leo Choerosphactes and the saracen Vizier", *Variorum Reprints,* XI, pp. 167-175, esp. p. 171.

63. Leo Choerosphactes was accused of "παραπρεσβεία", according to Arethas (see Jenkins, op. cit., p. 168-9), that is, of conducting his mission taking into account personal interests.

rated on a personal basis and ambassadors assumed the role of spies themselves. After all, according to Byzantine military strategists, one should be wary of envoys and messengers who could be spies in disguise, and treat them accordingly by feeding them misleading information or by keeping them under escort and at a safe distance[64]. Nicetas Chalkoutzes, for instance, ambassador to Sayf ad Dawla in 950 AD, when compelled to follow his raid into Byzantine territory as a hostage, found ways to communicate with the Byzantine general of the region, Leo Phocas, and to inform him of the Arabs' forces and routes thus contributing to a Byzantine victory[65]. In this last case we can safely assume the existence of contacts used as means of communicating information.

At the same time, it illustrates the way in which envoys could be treated both in Byzantium and in foreign lands. Being usually under escort −not to say under guard− is little less than being an actual hostage as in Chalkoutzes' case. This indicates that they were often considered as potential spies whose contacts with local population should therefore be restricted. Of course, as in this example, restrictions did not effectively prevent an ambassador contacting his "κρυπτοὶ φίλοι".

However, when the information to be imparted did not concern actual facts such as military operations (of which the ambassador could also have a first-hand knowledge as in the Chalkoutzes example), then the role of those contacts and the information they imparted across is less clear. They could inform on local customs, events and mentality, but, after all, the overall picture of the foreign people concerned and by implication its impact on the envoy's senders, depended upon the ambassador's interpretation of the information. A knowledgeable and experienced ambassador could avoid misinterpretations and, on the basis of contacts and information received, pass an accurate overall judgement on the people he visited. In Leo Choerosphactes' case, this judgement concerning the Arabs is one

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64. *Cecaumenos*, p. 13: "ἐὰν ἀποστείλῃ τινὰς πρός σε ὁ ἐναντίος ὡς δῆθεν μετὰ γραμμάτων, ἔσω γιγνώσκων ὅτι τοῦ κατασκοπεῦσαί σε ἦλθον..." *ibid.*, p. 13: "ἐὰν θέλεις κατασχεῖν τοὺς πρέσβεις ἡμέρας τινάς, ἃς ἀπληκεύσωσιν εἰς χαμηλότερον τόπον μετὰ πιστοῦ καὶ ἱκανοῦ ἀνθρώπου σου, ἵνα μὴ κατασκοπεύσωσι τὸν λαόν σου"
65. *Skylitzes*, p. 242. See also, Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes* II, pp. 341-342, 344-345.

of admiration[66]. But when an ambassador's actual contact with everyday life in the host country was quite limited or his interest focused on specific pieces of information, mostly of a military nature as in the case of the aforementioned embassy to Cordoba in 949 AD, the role of the "unofficial contacts" both in providing and in shaping the information about their land is even more important. Liutprand complaining about Byzantine measures, during his mission to Constantinople on behalf of Otto I in 968 AD, which restricted the access of his «amici» to him and deprived him of their gifts, inadvertently indicates that he was cut off from his sources of information[67] and this, among other factors, coloured his judgement.

The picture emerging from the examples presented, although by no means a complete one, implies a pattern: the ever presence of «unofficial contacts» –be they between central authorities, local authorities or in order to get in touch with rebel forces– in the field of foreign relations. At the same time, the official contacts, embassies and missions, presented –despite the restrictions imposed– a convenient meeting point with the unofficial contacts. This gave an added value to diplomatic encounters and stressed their role in shaping information. By their very existence, they were both at the providing and at the receiving end of information exchanged, thus playing a role in shaping foreign policy guidelines. This situation underlined also the interrelationship between diplomacy and espionage and pointed out a necessary qualification both in the context of diplomacy and that of espionage: the need for flexibility, quick thinking and good timing, already a prerequisite for the choice of ambassadors according to a 10th century compilation of accounts of past embassies[68], which acquired thus a more precise dimension. In this way an envoy's

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66. Kolias, *Leo Choerosphactes,* p. 95. On the credibility of ambassadorial reports see also E. Chrysos, "Η βυζαντινή διπλωματία ως μέσο επικοινωνίας" *Η Επικοινωνία στο Βυζάντιο, Πρακτικά του Β´ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου,* Athens, 1993, pp. 399-407, esp. p. 407.

67. C. B. Hase, *Liutprandi Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana, CSHB,* following the text of Leo Diaconus, Bonn 1828, p. 363.

68. D. Lee-J. Shepard, "A double Life. Placing the *Peri Presbeon",* *Byzantinoslavica* 52, 1991, pp. 15-39. Text of the prologue to the compilation under the title "Περὶ πρέσβεων Ρωμαίων πρὸς Ἐθνικοὺς" in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca,* 113, cols. 636-637, esp. col. 637C.

ability of "οἰκονομεῖν" covered also the possibility of receiving information under difficult conditions, processing and transmitting it. The espionage component was of course one among many different elements of diplomatic encounters and vice versa. It was however the component that punctuated the correspondence between military strategy and foreign policy, by use of delaying tactics and/or speedy reaction to particular events[69]. In a more direct way, it was the interrelationship between ambassadors and spies, the latter being a necessary source of information for the former and by inference in the area of foreign relations, that made possible the implementation of such a strategy, thus becoming a decisive factor for effective diplomacy. In the context of information control policy that prevailed in foreign relations, the ambassador-spy linkage operated a quasi-identification, and the envoys assumed the role of spies. This accounted also for the rather high public awareness of the espionage phenomenon, that sometimes resulted to suspicions if not extreme hostility towards travellers. Or, as Theophanes the chronicler put it, when emperor Artemius-Anastasius (713-715) sent Daniel of Sinope as ambassador to Syria, it was with the ostensible aim of peace negotiations, but in reality in order to spy on the Arabs' war preparations[70]. This comment openly acknowledged the possibility of espionage in the embassy context, while stressing, at the same time, the Byzantines' awareness of its existence in international relations.*

                                                    NIKE KOUTRAKOU

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69. J. Shepard, Information, esp. pp. 234, 251.

70. *Theophanes*, p. 588: "ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἄρχοντας ἐν Συρία πρὸς Οὐαλίδ, ὡς δῆθεν τὰ εἰρήνης προσλαλῆσαι, Δανιὴλ τον Σινωπίτην, πατρίκιον καὶ ὕπαρχον τῆς πόλεως ἐντειλάμενος αὐτῷ ἐν ἀκριβείᾳ διερευνῆσαι διὰ τῆς κατὰ Ρωμανίας κινήσεως καὶ δυνάμεως αὐτῶν".

* Nota bene: This paper was already sent to print, before the publishing of the book «Οι αιχμάλωτοι ως παράγοντες επικοινωνίας και πληροφόρησης», Athens 1994, by Sophia Patoura, which refers (op. cit., 124-131) to the role of prisoners in the espionage context. Also, for a discussion of the role played by Koupharas (see above n.60) in the Bulgarian conversion to Christianity, see Sophia Patoura, op. cit., p. 45.

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# In the depths of tenth-century Byzantine ceremonial: the treatment of Arab prisoners of war at imperial banquets

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Modern studies dedicated to the semantics of Byzantine ceremonies seem to agree on at least two points: (a) that the Byzantines had an elaborate ceremonial for every possible occasion and (b) that even the tiniest element of this ceremonial was loaded with multiple layers of meaning. Whether it took place in the streets of Constantinople, in the Hippodrome, in the *Forum* of Constantine or at various places in the palace, this lavish ceremonial always pursued the same ultimate goal: to impress, and intimidate, both the capital's citizenry and the visitors. The Byzantine ceremonial invariably had a religious dimension to it, which was to make everybody — Christian, pagan, and infidel alike — believe in the eternal glory and splendour of the Empire of New Rome. Sometimes, the observer was supposed to get this idea through watching, or partaking of, ceremonies that represented a magnificent blend of acclamations, music, light, colourful costumes, meaningful gestures and ample decoration. On other occasions, the same idea was propagated through the public humiliation of captured domestic rebels, high-ranking foreign captives, or other rulers' diplomatic agents; to make the picture complete, the act of humiliation could be extended to include a possible ill-treatment of the foreigners' servants and horses. Whether openly manifested or buried in subtle gestures, flattery and ridicule often went hand-in-hand in the language of Byzantine ceremonies. While foreigners may not have always been able to understand what was going on, no variation in the ceremonial could ever escape the sharp eye of the Byzantine courtier, to whom being in tune with the slightest change in the prevalent mood was simply a question of survival.

It was only natural for high-ranking foreign visitors, or heirs to

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foreign rulers who were held as hostages in Constantinople, to be invited to partake of the celebration of various holidays. The late ninth-century Byzantine ceremonial, however, makes provisions for the inclusion of foreign captives, namely Muslim prisoners of war, in at least two of the major ceremonies that took place in the capital. When, and why, Arab prisoners of war began to be invited to the regular Christmas Day and Easter Sunday imperial banquets is not mentioned by the Byzantine authors. Probably, this practice was established under Leo VI (886-912) and might have survived at least up to a certain point during his son's reign. Whatever the reason for this particular innovation, it seems to have been Leo's positive attitude toward the Muslims that altogether marked a turning point in the Byzantine treatment of Arab prisoners.

The previous three decades bore witness to a harsher treatment of Muslim captives.[1] The first Byzantine successes and bold advances on sea and land, which began as early as 856, may have brought little concrete advantage to the empire.[2] What they immediately brought, however, was great numbers of Arab prisoners. In fact, prisoner-exchanges between the Byzantines and the Arabs had begun as early as 845, according to Ya'qubi and Mas'udi, or 846, according to Tabari; by 855-856 the exchange of POWs seemed to have become a regular practice, which followed in the wake of every campaign. In other words, by the middle of the ninth century, the Byzantines had already begun to treat their Arab prisoners in a somewhat more humane, or at least non-homicidal, fashion. As could be seen from the surviving Arab accounts, among the prisoners there were women and children, too.[3]

1. The emperor Theophilos (829-842) is said to have been quite friendly with Muslim ambassadors visiting his court. Modern scholars attribute this to the emperor's admiration for Arab learning and art: see the dissertation thesis of N.M. El Cheikh-Saliba, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Harvard University 1992), 179-180. However, there is no evidence that Theophilos showed any lenience in his treatment of Muslim POWs; in fact, it seems that there were no prisoner-exchanges at that time.

2. Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, NJ 1969), 227 and nn. 1-4. According to Ostrogorsky, it was only after the victory of 863 that the tide turned and there began an era of Byzantine attack in Asia. Regretfully, S. Patoura's book on Byzantium and the Arabs remained inaccessible to me.

3. A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I (Bruxelles 1935), 222-240, 275-277, 310-311, 320-321, 336-337.

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At the same time, however, the successes of the imperial armies boosted the battle spirit of the Byzantines, which led to certain atrocities in the treatment of Muslim captives. Thus, in 863, the Byzantine army led by the emperor's uncle, Petronas, achieved a great and decisive victory over the Arab forces.[4] Later in the same year, the theme commanders celebrated a splendid triumphal entry into the capital. The head of a captured Arab emir was exposed to public ridicule in a city square in Constantinople. This was probably done on the initiative of the Byzantine military but, in any event, Emperor Michael III (842-867) did nothing to stop them.[5] Leo's father, Basil I (867-886), was also known for his cruel treatment of Muslim prisoners. An anonymous Byzantine chronicler, who paints an altogether idealised portrait of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, says that the Muslims, who were taken prisoner during the Cretan campaign of 866 and refused baptism, were tortured to death by order of Basil.[6] Basil was not emperor at that time; unfortunately, there is no evidence showing how he treated Muslim captives after his ascent to power.

The above-mentioned facts suggest that under Michael III, and possibly under Basil I too, there was a certain ambivalence in the way Byzantines treated their Muslim prisoners: on one hand, there was the imperial government's willingness to go for prisoner-exchanges rather, than have the prisoners killed; on the other hand, the Byzantine military continued to capitalise on their victories over the Muslims by occasionally being 'tough' on the POWs, and the government did nothing to stop them.

That the radical change in the treatment of Arab POWs may have occurred under Leo VI could be seen from what Leo himself has to say about Arab customs and warfare,[7] and from the so-called

4. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, I, 249-256.

5. *Georgii Hamartoli Continuatus*, ed. E. Muralt (St. Petersburg 1859), 734. Cf. M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and Early Medieval West* (Cambridge-London-New York 1986), 150-151.

6. Theoph. Cont., *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1838), 300-301.

7. Leo, *Tactica*, caps. 123 ff., (Migne, *PG* 107, cols. 976-980). This military treatise was probably compiled not long after the capture of Thessalonika by an Arab fleet (904). Cf. A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London-New York-Toronto 1973), 382 sqq.

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*Kletorologion* of Philotheos.[8] Both documents treat Arabs with a degree of deference and respect, which cannot be found in earlier Byzantine writings.

Philotheos, who wisely dedicated his work to his sovereign, describes himself as an 'imperial *protospatharios* and *atriklines*'. The duty of the *atriklinai* was to conduct the ceremonial of the imperial banquets, to receive the guests and arrange them in order of precedence; in order to fulfill this duty, the *atriklines* needed a list of all the officials and dignitaries, arranged in order of precedence; this list was called a *kletorologion*.[9] That periodic changes were made in the *kletorologia* is clear from the comparison between the above-mentioned one, written by Philotheos, and an earlier one, known as the *Taktikon Uspenski*, which was compiled in the 830s, or 840s.[10] While the *Taktikon Uspenski* makes no provisions for Arab delegations to be entertained at the palace, Philotheos places the 'Agarene friends' even higher than the 'friends' from Christian countries, such as Bulgaria and Francia. Furthermore, he makes provisions for Arab POWs to attend the imperial banquets twice a year, and gives detailed instructions as to who should supervise the Arabs, where they should be sitting during the banquets, and — last but not least — what costume should the palace provide for them.

Some forty five or fifty years later, when Leo's son, Constantine VII (913-959), compiled his *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, he dutifully incorporated Philotheos's work in this cermonial handbook of his. Was Constantine simply trying to revive an extinct practice,

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8. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos was compiled several years earlier, in September 899. The best known editions of this text are: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, ed. I. Reiske, I (Bonn 1829), 702-798; Migne, *PG* 112 (Paris 1897), cols. 1291-1434; J.B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century. With a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (London 1911; repr.: New York 1958), 131-179; N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles* (Paris 1972), 81-235.

9. Bury, *op. cit.*, 11-12; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 27-28.

10. Bury, *op. cit.*, 12-13. Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, 'Taktikon Uspenskog i Taktikon Beneševiča', *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta*, II (1953), 39 ff. and Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 45-47, who suggest 842/843 as a possible date of compilation of the *Taktikon Uspenski*.

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or, were Muslim prisoners still being entertained at the palace?[11] The so-called *Taktikon Beneševič*[12] could have proved whether, in the 930s and 940s, Arab POWs were invited to the imperial banquets, or not: unfortunately, the part describing the Christmas and Easter banquets is missing in the surviving text. The same could be said about another *taktikon*, the so-called *Escorial*, which was probably compiled in the 970s; in this case, only the beginning of the description of the Easter Day banquet has come down to us.[13]

While it seems relatively easy to establish approximately when Arab prisoners began to be invited to the imperial banquets, it is not so easy to find out why these people had to be invited in the first place. As Toynbee points out, Leo's military treatise *Taktika* reveals the 'paramount feeling of respect', which he must have had for his Muslim adversaries.[14] Leo VI describes the Arabs as a formidable enemy: in his judgment, the Arabs have adopted Roman weapons and often copy the Roman tactics; they excel all foreign nations in intelligence and conduct of military operations; being fully aware of the importance, which Arabs attach to their horses, the emperor advises the Romans to disable the Arabs' horses by shooting them with poisonous arrows.

But was it only this 'paramount feeling of respect' for the Arabs that made Leo VI invite Muslim POWs to his banquets? Leo seems to have written his *Taktika* not long after the Byzantines had suffered a considerable setback in their wars against the Muslims: in 904, an Arab fleet captured the empire's second largest city, Thessalonika. Philotheos, on the other hand, compiled his guidebook on palace

11. There has been a long-lasting discussion among scholars whether the *Book of Ceremonies* presents an accurate account, or an idealised picture, of the Byzantine court ceremonial. Cf. M. McCormick, 'Analysing Imperial Ceremonies', in *JÖB* 35 (1985), 1-10.

12. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 240-243: the suggested date for the compilation of this *taktikon* is 934/944. Cf. *ibid.*, 243-253.

13. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 252-277: the suggested date of compilation is 971/975. Cf. idem, 'Un taktikon inédit du Xe siècle. Cod. Scorial. gr. R-II-11', in N. Oikonomidès, *Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VIIe-XVe s.)* (Variorum Reprints: London 1976), no. X.

14. A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London-New York-Toronto 1973), 382-383.

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receptions five years earlier, in a period when the Byzantines could afford to show some leniency in their treatment of Arab prisoners. At that time, Emperor Leo had managed to establish Byzantine power firmly in South Italy by the formation of the theme of Longibardia (892) and was just about to push the imperial authority eastward by the foundation of the province of Mesopotamia (900).[15] Whether past or pending, the military victories over the Saracens may have boosted Leo's confidence in his own power which, in turn, explains why he may have decided to display a certain amount of largesse in his dealings with them. The emperor's benevolent attitude toward the Muslim captives naturally found reflection in the imperial ceremonial and, hence, in the list compiled by the *atriklines*, Philotheos.

Be that as it may, by the year 899, Arab POWs were regularly invited to the Christmas Day and Easter Sunday imperial banquets. Even if this practice was temporarily suspended after the tragedy of 904, it must have been resumed shortly afterwards for there is evidence coming from early tenth-century Arab sources showing that, at that time, Muslim prisoners were invited to the imperial banquets.[16] In Constantine VII's day, Muslim POWs were also invited to the banquets that followed the diplomatic receptions given in honour of Muslim envoys.

Before we consider the details of the Muslim prisoners' treatment at the imperial Christmas and Easter banquets, we need to take a look at the general rules prescribed by Philotheos for the reception of Muslim 'friends', i.e., Arab embassies on a mission to Constantinople. Sections II and III of the *Kletorologion* contain lists of the officials in the order in which they are introduced by the *atriklines*. As could be expected, this order is a reflection of the hierarchy of the existing ranks. Section II deals with the highest ranks while Section III deals with the lower ones, beginning with the *protospatharioi*.

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15. See R.J.H. Jenkins, *Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries, AD 610-1071* (London 1966), 198-211. See also the summary of the Byzantine-Arab naval rivalry in the period between the 850s and the 960s in Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 342-345.

16. This evidence comes from the work of Ibn Rosteh, who tells the story of Harun-ibn-Yahya's captivity in Constantinople; modern scholars have dated ibn-Yahya's captivity anywhere between the years 880/890 and 912/913. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, II (Bruxelles 1950), 380-382, 388-389.

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As an appendix to Section III, there are instructions as to how certain high-ranking foreign guests should be treated. Ecclesiastical dignitaries rank highest, and the representatives of Rome have precedence over the *synkelloi* of Antioch and Jerusalem.[17] They are followed by 'the Agarene friends', whose rank equals that of the *patrikioi* and *strategoi*. The Eastern Agarenes, however, have precedence over the Western ones.[18] The Muslims are followed by 'the Bulgarian friends', who receive almost identical honours.[19] They, in turn, are followed by 'the embassies from the Franks'; if these are clergy, they belong to the same class of dignitaries, that is, the *patrikioi* and *strategoi*; if these are lay persons, then they belong to the lower class of the *offikialioi*.[20] At the bottom of the list are 'the friends coming from other nations'; they are assimilated to the class of *spatharokandidatoi*, which is one of the modest ranks in the Byzantine hierarchy.[21]

While the honourable position assigned to the Bulgarian delegation was obviously the result of the recently concluded peace between Byzantium and Bulgaria (896),[22] the honours paid to the Muslim ambassadors were probably a reflection of Leo's effort to appease both the Western and Eastern Muslims, as they were Byzantium's neighbours in Italy and the Middle East. The fact that Muslims rank second only to the ecclesiastical delegations dispatched by Rome,

17. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 163.6-13.
18. *Ibid.*, 163.14-17.
19. *Ibid.*, 163.18-165.4: similarly to the Arab 'friends', the Bulgarians are assigned the rank of *patrikioi* and *strategoi*.
20. *Ibid.*, 165.5-7: εἰ δὲ παγανοί εἰσιν in the Greek original should probably be translated as 'if these are lay persons' rather, than 'if these are pagans'.
21. *Ibid.*, 165.8-9.
22. The Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 894-896 had ended with a defeat for Byzantium: see Ostrogorsky, *History*, 256-257. As a result, at the end of the century, the Bulgarian delegations visiting Constantinople enjoyed certain privileges, which gave them precedence over the delegations from other Christian nations: see above, nn. 20, 21. The peace treaty of 927 contained a similar clause: at the palace, the Bulgarian 'friend' ranked as *patrikios* and was given precedence over the 'guests' from Francia. This rule was still in force some forty years later: in 968, during the banquet celebrating the Feast of the Holy Apostles, the ambassador of Otto I, Liudprand, made a fuss about it. See Liudprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, cap. XIX, in *Quellen zur Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit. Widukinds Sachsengeschichte, Adalberts Fortsetzung der Chronik Reginos, Liudprands Werke*, ed. A. Bauer and R. Rau (Darmstadt 1971), 532.5-25.

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Antioch and Jerusalem implies that, under Leo, the imperial government assigned exceptional importance to its dealings with the Arabs. As we will see, at the Christmas and Easter banquets, Arabs and Bulgarians appear next to each other once again, this time at a lower level: Muslim POWs are seated next to the 'men of the Bulgarians', that is, the low-ranking members of the delegation led by the two important 'Bulgarian friends'.

The court ceremonies celebrated on various religious holidays are discussed in Section IV of the *Kletorologion*. The section begins with detailed instructions as to how the Christmas Day banquet should be organised and carried out. It took place in the so-called *Triklinos of the Nineteen Couches*. The dignitaries of the highest ranks wearing *chlamydes* and the ones of the lower ranks wearing *skaramangia* were stationed each in the place where their rank as well as the colour and cut of their dress required them to be.

There seemed to be no high-ranking Muslim 'friends' at the annual Christmas banquets, which is understandable: no Muslim court would dispatch an embassy whose purpose would be to take part in the celebration of a Christian holiday. There seem to have been no Frankish delegations, either: being too far away, the Eastern and Western Frankish courts may have seen it as economically unfeasible to sponsor embassies whose single task would be to participate in Byzantine banquets. The Bulgarian 'friends', however, were invariably there. They were to be showed in immediately after the representatives of the Great Church and the imperial *synkletikoi*, whose number totalled twelve. As Philotheos says, to the most honoured dinner of the *Nineteen Couches* you must invite two *magistroi*, six *anthypatoi*, *patrikioi* and *strategoi*, two 'Bulgarian friends', and two officials of the rank τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ λογοθέτου or of a lower rank, altogether twelve friends who must surround the emperor after the fashion of the Twelve Apostles. This category of 'friends' wore *chlamydes*, with clasps in the front, and had *kampagia* on their feet.[23]

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23. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 167.10-18. Oikonomidès suggests that the *kampagia* mentioned in the text were some type of specially decorated sandals, which were worn by the military in the Late Roman empire and which, in early Byzantium, were worn by the highest-ranking dignitaries; in the ninth century, this type of sandals were worn by most of the dignitaries. See *ibid.*, 167, n. 145.

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They were followed by a horde of officials of lower ranks, from the imperial notaries down to the bearers of the imperial sceptres, whose number totalled one hundred and sixty eight, that is, fourteen times twelve.[24] Once these people were ushered in and seated at the right places, another group of people were let in. These were: twenty four, i.e., two times twelve, Agarenes from the *Praetorium*; twelve 'men of the Bulgarian friends'; and some 'poor brothers' whose number was also twelve. The Arabs were to be seated at the sixth and seventh tables facing the emperor. The 'men of the Bulgarians' went to the eighth table of the same circuit, while the 'poor ones' were to sit at the ninth table.[25] Once again, Philotheos points out that everybody should be seated where their apparel and rank requires them to be. As for the Agarenes, they were not wearing *chlamydes* or *skaramangia*, which was the colourful dress of the Byzantine dignitaries and their important Christian guests. The Arabs' costume was some white apparel, deprived of a belt; they had to wear shoes, too, but Philotheos does not say what kind of shoes.[26]

Beginning with Christmas Day, the festivities were supposed to last twelve days, which is why the whole series of banquets was called *dodekaemeron*; the feasting was to end on 5 January, the evening before Epiphany. Philotheos describes, in a characteristic meticulous manner, the ceremony as it evolves, day by day, all the way to its very end, on the Feast of the Holy Light.[27] Normally, the twelve-day celebration brought hundreds and hundreds of people to the imperial banquet, including the so-called 'emperor's people' who came in great numbers, such as sixty four men at a time. It is hard to say whether the purpose of having them at the banquet was only to give them a chance to share a meal with the rest of the guests, or

24. *Ibid.*, 169.1-8.
25. *Ibid.*, 169.8-20.
26. *Ibid.*, 169.20-21: τοὺς δὲ Ἀγαρηνοὺς λευκοφόρους.
27. Oikonomidès erroneously translates ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν ἁγίων Φώτων as *l'Épiphanie*. Cf. *ibid.*, 184. Epiphany (6 Jan.) is the day after the Feast of the Holy Light (5 Jan.). On this day, the Feast of the Holy Light, angels descend from Heaven and, bringing divine light to the universal Church, herald the celebration of the baptism of the Son. The baptism itself is celebrated on the next day, which is Epiphany.

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they had to serve as security guards in the overcrowded hall as well.[28] It seems that no foreigners were invited to the banquets of the second, third, fourth and fifth days.

On the sixth day, the archbishop of Constantinople (i.e., the patriarch), the abbots of the twelve most influential monasteries, and two hundred and sixteen monks were also invited to 'the most venerable imperial dinner' and were seated twelve by twelve. They were not dressed up but wore their monastic habit, and brought their collection boxes with them. The emperor gave them various sums of money, which they accepted as donations, and recited the usual eulogy in response.[29] The celebration of the sixth day seemed to be somewhat tricky, though: according to Philotheos, if Nativity happened to be on a Monday or a Tuesday, then on the Sunday of the same week, before you invited the patriarch and the abbots, you had to organise 'the so-called banquet of the many hairs' (τὸ λεγόμενον κλητόριον τὸν πολύτριχον). This was a gathering of all the 'barbarians', who were either 'friends' or employees of the emperor. The 'Bulgarian friends' as well as the Byzantine dignitaries of their class and the two *demarchoi* of the Greens and the Blues are specifically mentioned on this one day, too; they were all dressed in *chlamydes*.[30] The 'emperor's people', who came from various 'barbaric' nations, such as Pharganes (Asian Turks?), Khazars, Agarenes, and Franks were also invited to the 'banquet of the many hairs' and were eventually given money ('imperial *rhoga*'). They came in their usual clothes, which Philotheos calls *kabbadia*.[31] The Agarenes mentioned in this

28. As regards the 'emperor's men', Shepard believes that many of them were actually foreign-born title-holders. See J. Shepard, 'Byzantine Diplomacy, 800-1204: Means and Ends', in *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers of the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990,* ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin, 41-71, see esp. 62-63. Knowing that this institution may have evolved out of the *agentes in rebus* who, in early Byzantium, were primarily concerned with internal security, I am inclined to believe that, foreign title-holders or not, the 'emperor's men' were invited to the banquets in their capacity of security guards.

29. *Ibid.*, 174.14-177.19.

30. *Ibid.*, 177.20-28.

31. *Ibid.*, 177.28-179.3. Cf. *ibid.*, 209.13-25 — μετὰ τὸ ἐθνικὸν ἴδιον σχῆμα, οἱονεὶ τὸ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπιλεγόμενον καββάδιν. According to Oikonomides, this was some type of a long cloak, probably of oriental origin. See *ibid.*, 178, n. 171. One wonders if this cloak were part of the uniform worn by the imperial guard.

case seem to have been some Arabs employed in the *hetaireia*, the imperial guard; they were probably Christians. As for the seventh- and eighth-day dinners, it seems that no foreigners were invited to any of them.

The celebration on the ninth day was an evening gala dinner, which was called *trygetikon*, meaning a 'fruit gathering', or 'vintage'. The twelve highest-ranking guests were, of course, *magistroi, anthypatoi, patrikioi* and *strategoi*, the two 'Bulgarian friends' and the two *demarchoi*, all of them wearing their colourful *chlamydes* and their *kampagia*. They were followed by a multitude of officials of lower ranks, all dressed up for the occasion. No Arabs or other 'barbarians' were present at this dinner; however, the 'poor ones' were there, and they had collection boxes (*sphragidia*) with them, which makes me believe that these were actually monks, who had taken vows to live in poverty.[32] The tenth day witnessed another stream of people pour into the *Nineteen Couches*, from the twelve 'imperial friends' of the highest rank (this time without the Bulgarians) down to the emperor's physicians in their garments coloured in two different shades of blue, and another twelve men of 'the poor' who, in this case, might have been recruited from among the commonality.[33]

On the evening of the eleventh day, there was yet another banquet: this time it took place in the brightly lit *Triklinos* of Justinian II. After the divine office, which was celebrated before dinner was served, the *atriklines* had to ask all the guests to change their clothes and put the required *skaramangia* on, so that they could dine with the emperor.[34] On the last day of the *dodekaemeron*, which was the Feast of the Holy Light, the elite of the Church were invited to the palace. Along with the patriarch and the metropolitans came certain numbers of priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers: they were recruited from among the clergy of the palace, St. Sophia and the *Nea* church. Because, in this case, the clergy represented the angels, who had come down to Earth to celebrate the union between Earth and Heaven, they had to be dressed up in white. The patriarch gave his blessing

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32. *Ibid.*, 181.10-183.3.
33. *Ibid.*, 183.5-22: these 'poor' had no collection boxes with them.
34. *Ibid.*, 183.24-185.4.

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to the assembly while the choir was singing *antiphonies*.[35] Something
of a hymnographer himself, Emperor Leo VI had ordered that certain
changes in the liturgy be made, so that his own compositions could
be included in it.[36] These festivities ended at the twelfth hour of the
day, that is, at six in the evening. They were followed by a reception
and dances. These were followed by a special ceremony: a banquet
in the brightly lit *Triklinos* of Justinian during which the emperor
granted dignities to some of his officials. In response, all those present,
dressed up in their formal clothes with open *chlamydes* on top, saluted
him under the sounds of the organ.[37] The twelve-day Christmas
celebration was followed by races in the Hippodrome and a gala
dinner in the *triklinos* of the *kathismata*;[38] these races probably took
place at some point after Epiphany.

Arab POWs were also invited to the Sunday Easter banquet. This
time, the banquet took place in the 'renowned *Chrysotriklinos*', which
derived its name from the famous gold, or gilded, *pentapyrgion* ('five-
tower' cupboard?) that was on display there. The celebration was a
theatricalised version of the appearance of Jesus Christ (represented
by the emperor) before his disciples (the emperor's subjects).[39] Once
again, the dignitaries, dressed up in *chlamydes* and *skaramangia*,
were conducted into the banquet hall by order of their rank. The
fourteen highest officials came first.[40] The 'two Bulgarian friends'
were showed in together with the *magistroi, anthypatoi, patrikioi,
strategoi* and a bunch of other officials, whose number totalled thirty.
As befitted people of their rank, they wore *chlamydes*. They were
followed by two hundred and thirty officials of lower ranks, beginning
with *kandidatoi* and *silentiarioi* and ending with bearers of the imperial

35. *Ibid.*, 185.5-187.15, see esp. p. 187.1-2: τοὺς μὲν ἱερωμένους ἅπαντας μετὰ
τῶν οἰκείων λευκῶν φελωνίων ('all the ordained ones must be wearing their white
cloaks').
36. *Ibid.*, 189.1-7.
37. *Ibid.*, 189.8-27.
38. *Ibid.*, 189.28-30. Cf. R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* (2nd ed.: Paris 1964),
182: the emperor's box in the Hippodrome was called *kathisma*; the palace tōn
kathismatōn was presumably situated somewhere near the Hippodrome. As a rule, the
races were followed by banquets that took place in the *triklinos* of the *kathismata*.
39. *Ibid.*, 201.1-19.
40. *Ibid.*, 201.20-17: Philotheos describes these guests' apparel in great detail, from
their robes down to their embroidered scarfs and girdles.

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sceptres and insignia.[41] Once these people were taken to their seats, the next group to be conducted into the hall were eighteen Agarenes from the *Praetorium* and eighteen 'men of the Bulgarian friends', that is, low-ranking members of the Bulgarian delegation.[42] While the two important 'Bulgarian friends' were seated at the second table together with the *strategoi*, their not so important compatriots had to sit next to the Agarene captives. As on the previous occasion, the Agarenes had to wear some white apparel, which did not include a belt, and had to have shoes on their feet. The 'men of the Bulgarian friends', who were sitting at the next table, were allowed to come in their own clothes.[43] Organ music and chanting provided the musical background for the banquet. On the next day, when the liturgy at the church of the Holy Apostles was over, the feasting continued in the Great *Triklinos*. This time metropolitans were present, too. In its third day, the banquet was to take place in the *Chrysotriklinos*, and the arrangements were to be the same as the ones for the first day.[44]

As a rule, the fourth and fifth day of the Easter banquet bore witness to a mind-boggling amount of people, who were invited to the 'golden imperial table': their occupation and status ranged from the fourteen abbots of influential monasteries down to various *basilikoi anthropoi*, who came in great numbers, for example, seventy two men at a time. The 'emperor's men' were of the orders of the *spatharokandidatoi* and the *stratoroi* and, as I mentioned before, they may have had to act as security guards as well.

On the sixth day, the banquet was preceded by a solemn procession throughout the palace. Later, during the banquet, the 'two Bulgarian friends' were expected to deliver 'the gifts from the Bulgarians' to the emperor. Once again, they had to be seated together with *magistroi*, *anthypatoi* and others of the same rank, the number of these people totalling thirty.[45] Their suite of eighteen men were to sit at one of the 'inferior' tables, all by themselves.[46] There seem to have been no

41. *Ibid.*, 203.7-13.
42. *Ibid.*, 203.13-15.
43. *Ibid.*, 203.25-31.
44. *Ibid.*, 205.7-207.5.
45. *Ibid.*, 207.32-209.6.
46. *Ibid.*, 209.8-11.

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other foreigners invited to partake of the sixth-day celebration.

On the seventh day, after a procession in the interior of the palace, the guests came into the *Chrysotriklinos*. Apart from the high-ranking dignitaries, this dinner was attended by a number of civil servants and military of lower ranks as well: for example, we come across the *domestikoi* of the West and the foreigners of the imperial guard (οἱ ἐθνικοὶ τῆς ἑταιρείας), such as Turks (Magyars?), Khazars and others, whose number totalled forty four. The 'barbarians' came in their usual *kabbadia*.[47] The emperor gave them one *nomisma* each. In the previous years, according to Philotheos, it was not the 'barbarians' of the *hetaireia* but the *chartoularioi* of the treasury of St. Sophia that were invited to this banquet; in response to the imperial generosity, the *chartoularioi* recited the usual eulogy.[48]

The Easter celebrations continued into the next week with a morning service on the First Sunday after Easter. A splendid procession of people dressed in colourful clothes made its way to the church of the Holy Apostles. When the liturgy was over, at the second hour of the day (i.e., eight in the morning), the *Triklinos* of Justinian opened its doors to a banquet, which was attended by both the emperor and patriarch.[49] On the next day, which was the Monday of the second week after Easter Sunday, the *Triklinos* of Justinian was opened for another reception, with organ music but no dances. On the third day of the second week after Easter Sunday, there were races in the Hippodrome and a farewell-party for the 'Bulgarian friends' who were leaving; this was followed by another banquet, which took place in the famous *triklinos* of the *kathismata*.[50]

The Agarene captives from the *Praetorium* seem to have been present only at the first day of the eight-day Easter celebration. The Muslims are not mentioned in connection with the Pentecost festivities that were to begin a month later. A somewhat later source says that

47. *Ibid.*, 209.13-25. Cf. *ibid.*, 209.24: οἱ δὲ ἐθνικοὶ μετὰ τῶν αὐτῶν καββαδίων. See the identical description of the clothes of the 'barbarians', who attended the 'banquet of the many hairs' during the Christmas festivities.
48. *Ibid.*, 209.25-27.
49. *Ibid.*, 209.28-34.
50. *Ibid.*, 211.9-16.

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the Muslim prisoners, both male and female, were tipped three *nomismata* each on Good Friday by Romanos Lekapenos.[51] We do not know if this practice of tipping Arab POWs on Good Friday existed in the days of Leo VI, or not.

Now we have to go back to the main question: why did Arab prisoners have to be invited to the imperial banquets? Was it only because the fair treatment of the POWs would have given the Byzantines leverage in the peace negotiations, and prisoner-exchanges, with the Arabs? Or, was it because the Byzantines wanted to demonstrate the universal nature of their religion, and to substantiate the universalist claims of their empire, by including in their ceremonies as many people of different nationalities as possible?

The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos is, indeed, a living monument to Emperor Leo's love of 'multinationalism': no other Byzantine source makes such extensive provisions for the participation of foreign nationals in the imperial banquets. Furthermore, when referring to one of the gala dinners, Philotheos says that now it is the foreigners of the *hetaireia* that have to be invited, and tipped, and not the *chartoularioi* of St. Sophia, as it used to be. The banquets were obviously perceived as 'universal' gatherings of people of every nationality and status. Since there were no Muslim delegations, the Muslim POWs from the Great *Praetorium* could have been used as substitutes for the missing Arab ambassadors. And, in the absence of Frankish delegations, the Byzantines may have had to settle for the *hetaireia* to represent the Franks as well as the rest of the world at the imperial court. The person to host these banquets was, of course, the universal Christian ruler, the *basileus*.

This explanation seems plausible to me. Yet, knowing the Byzantines' weakness for numbers, signs, gestures and colours, one is tempted to look further into the possible meaning of the above-mentioned ceremonies.

In the first place, what strikes the reader of the *Kletorologion* as peculiar is the fact that low-ranking Bulgarians and Arab POWs appear next to each other at the Christmas Day and Easter Sunday

51. Theoph. Cont. (ed. Bonn.), 430.

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banquets. While the two important 'Bulgarian friends' may have
belonged to the upper crust of Bulgarian society, or were even members
of the Bulgarian royal family, their suite were probably people
belonging to the class of the lesser nobility. At Christmas Day, there
were twelve 'men of the Bulgarians' and twenty four (two times
twelve) Agarenes from the *Praetorium*; they sat next to each other,
at neighbouring tables. At Easter Sunday, there were eighteen 'men
of the Bulgarians' and eighteen Agarenes from the *Praetorium*; once
again, they were seated next to each other. If we assume that the
'men of the Bulgarians' belonged to the lesser nobility in their country,
does this mean that the Muslim POWs, too, belonged to the lesser
nobility among the Arabs?

Arab authors, who wrote in the middle or the latter part of the
tenth century, describe the Muslim prisoners, who were kept in the
capital, as VIPs.[52] It is true that the Arab sources, which refer to the
good treatment of Muslim POWs in Constantinople, come from a
somewhat later epoch, the mid- and late-900s. As early as the late
ninth or the very beginning of the tenth century, however, the
Byzantines seem to have already adopted the practice of distributing
POWs among prisons with varying regimes. Of the four prisons that
existed in the Byzantine capital, one was used for Tarsans and another
one — for other Muslims.[53] As for the rank and file of the Muslim
captives, they were distributed among four other prisons, which were
located in different *themata* of the empire. Dividing Muslim POWs

52. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 423-424; Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 384-386: according to a late tenth-
century Arab writer, Muqaddasi, the Muslim prisoners, who were kept in the Byzantine
capital, were not forced to work and were well taken care of. They were free to
practice their Muslim beliefs in a mosque. In order to accommodate Muslim prisoners
of aristocratic descent, the Byzantines built a spacious house, which was situated near
the palace. This evidence, however, refers to the 980s, that is, the reign of Basil II
(976-1025). The POWs mentioned by Muqaddasi may have belonged to the higher
Arab aristocracy who, unlike their fellow countrymen of the lesser nobility, were
treated as royal hostages rather, than prisoners of war.

53. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 385. Cf. *ibid.*, 393: Ibn-Yahya says that a large aqueduct
brought water from 'the lands of the Bulgarians' into Constantinople. As soon as it
reached the City, the aqueduct split into three branches: one of them brought water
to the palace, the second to the prisons of the Muslims, and the third to the baths of
the patricians and the rest of the citizenry.

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into categories and giving preferential treatment to those who were of noble descent would have eventually meant more ransom money, of course. But were the Byzantines interested in the money only?

Unlike the ordinary Muslims, both refugees and captives, whom the Byzantines encouraged to accept baptism in return for a comfortable settlement in the empire,[54] the people kept in the *Praetorium* may have been unwilling to apostatise. And, if these were aristocrats who could later be ransomed for a lot of money, it is highly unlikely that the imperial government would have gone as far as to have them forcibly converted to Christianity. At the same time, however, Byzantines believed that it was their emperor's task to guarantee everybody's salvation through the worldwide spread of Orthodoxy. In order to fulfil this task without openly challenging the Arab prisoners' beliefs, the Byzantine authorities may have been compelled to resort to a compromise solution; they may have been trying to symbolically convert the Muslims to Christianity by subjecting them to a quasi-baptismal ceremony. The Muslims would not be aware of what was going on but, all the same, the salvation of their souls would be guaranteed. And the emperor would score points in the eyes of both his subjects and his Christian foreign guests; he would be seen as a truly universal ruler capable of converting the whole world to Byzantine Christianity.

That the Arab POWs were subject to a quasi-baptism of sorts could be seen from the following two facts: (a) the Agarenes attending the Christmas and Easter banquets were vested in what was called 'the white robes of sinlessness', worn by the saints, the angels and the *katechoumenoi*, or the 'enlightened' (i.e., the catechumens to be baptised on Holy Saturday evening) and (b) they were invited to partake of Christian ceremonies that either immediately preceded the opening of the baptismal season in the Orthodox liturgical calendar

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54. Constantine Porphyrogenitus describes the privileges, which ex-Muslim settlers enjoyed in his day: they were given enough money to set up a household, and were exempted from certain taxes for a three-year period. A three-year tax exemption period was also granted to land-owning families who adopted an ex-Muslim son-in-law. Cf. Const. Porph., *De cerim.*, 694-695. It is not clear, however, when this 'law' was adopted.

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(Epiphany), or followed in the wake of a baptismal ceremony that was specially designed to accommodate adult *katechoumenoi* (the Vigil before Easter Sunday). In order to make my point clear, I will briefly describe the baptismal rites observed by the Orthodox church. I will also attempt to examine the meaning, which the Byzantines attached to the various numbers and colours in their religious and court ceremonial.

In the early Church, baptism, whose main purpose is the remission of sin through lustration in the name of the Holy Trinity, was preceded by a lengthy catechumenate, which lasted three years. Later, probably in the seventh century, the catechumenate was reduced to the last weeks of Lent while the baptismal rites were performed on Holy Saturday evening. The preparatory rites that preceded the act of baptism were at first celebrated on Good Friday.[55] From at least the eighth century on, the Byzantine usage compressed all of this into a service immediately preceding baptism. The earliest surviving document describing some of the preparatory rites, but not the order of baptism itself, is the so-called *Barberini Euchologion* (fol. 260 sq.), which was compiled *ca.* 790. It closely follows the prescriptions of John Chrysostom.[56]

As could be seen from a tenth-century manuscript published by J. Mateos, the *Typikon* of the Great Church stipulates that the catechumens, accompanied by six deacons, ought to be exhorted by the patriarch on Monday of the third week of Lent.[57] The baptismal ceremony was to be performed by the patriarch himself on Holy Saturday evening. Prior to the actual baptising, he had to change into a white *sticharion*. At the end of the ceremony, all the priests, who had also changed into white *sticharia*, had to descend the *synthronos* (in the apse) in an angel-like manner while chanting the baptismal

55. See the rubrics *baptism* and *catechumenate* in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan (New York-Oxford 1991), I, 251, 390-391.

56. An English translation of this text is available in E.C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Ceremony* (London ²1970), 69-82.

57. J. Mateos, *Le Typikon de la Grande Église. Ms. Sainte-Croix No. 40, X^e siècle* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 166), II: *Le cycle des fêtes mobiles* (Roma 1963), 30-32.

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*troparion*. Now, the 'enlightened' were to dress in white robes, too.[58] That all the participants in this ceremony had to be vested in white is only natural: white stands for purity and is the liturgical colour for the Easter season. On the next day, the newly baptised, together with the others, participated in a service, which included the famous psalm 'What God is great like Our God?'.[59] This psalm evokes powerful images of God trampling upon his enemies. Apart from being chanted on Easter Sunday and on all the other Orthodox holidays associated with baptism, this psalm was also chanted during the service (16 August) commemorating the Virgin's delivery of Constantinople from the Arabs in 718. As McCormick has shown, this psalm was chanted during the celebration of tenth-century triumphs over captured Arabs as well.[60]

Initially, the Church made provisions for baptism to be performed on Holy Sabbath only. Later, however, Constantinople began celebrating this ritual on Epiphany, Lazarus Saturday and Pentecost, too, because of the baptismal and resurrectional symbolism associated with these days.[61] While the Muslim POWs seem to have been absent from the celebrations on Lazarus Saturday and Pentecost, their participation in at least the first banquet of the twelve-day feasting prior to Epiphany is, as we have seen, well attested. The baptismal ceremony on Epiphany

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58. *Ibid.*, 86-87: The vesper began with two psalms; when the chanting was over, the patriarch and the presbyters made their entry; they carried the Gospel, the Big Incensory and three chandeliers; the patriarch ascended the [patriarchal] throne in the apse. The *prokeimenon* that followed consisted of another four psalms, then *Gen.* 1, 1-5 was read. After that, the patriarch came down from the apse and approached the *Great Baptisterium*; he changed into a white *sticharion*, then made his entry into the *Baptisterium* (the *Baptisterium* in question was built in the form of a small basilica, with a narthex that led to the baptismal font). The patriarch had to go around the baptismal font three times while waving the incensory; in this, he was assisted by the deacons; then he performed the baptismal lumination, according to the order of baptism. After several more psalms and readings from the Gospel, the patriarch got out of the *Baptisterium* and made a solemn ritual entrance through the *Main Gates* into the nave; he was followed by the newly baptised (the 'newly enlightened'). Chanting the baptismal *troparion*, the presbyters descended from the apse and changed into white *sticharia*, too. Dressed in white, the 'newly enlightened' joined the waiting congregation in the final rite of initiation, communion in the paschal Eucharist.
59. *Ibid.*, 88.
60. McCormick, *op. cit.*, 161-162.
61. See *baptism* in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, I, 251.

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is quite similar to the Holy Sabbath one.[62] The liturgical colour of the season, which begins with Christmas Eve and ends with Epiphany, is white (with the exception of the Feast of St. Stephen when the colour is red). Similarly, the colour for the liturgical season beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with Pentecost is white, too. As I have already shown, these are the two liturgical seasons when the Orthodox church performs baptismal rites, and when both clergy and catechumens have to change in white during the ceremony. Being the colour of purity and sinlessness,[63] white had to be worn by those, who sought remission of their sins, as well as by those, who helped them go through the process of purification and lustration in the name of the Trinity. Needless to say, the order of baptism was highly dramatised in order to produce maximum effect on those who were being baptised, and on the congregation as a whole.

With the decline of the adult catechumenate and the shift to infant baptism, which seems to have been completed by the end of the sixth century, it is safer to assume that, in the middle Byzantine period, the rites designed for the baptism of adults were reserved exclusively for foreigners, whether these were entire nations seeking conversion to Byzantine Christianity (e.g., Bulgarians, Serbs and, later, Russians), or adult individuals (e.g., Muslim captives and renegades). We do not know what the mass conversion of adults in the Slavic countries was like in the ninth and tenth centuries. Once foreigners were safely brought to the imperial capital, however, the Byzantines would hardly fail to perform the proper baptismal rites, accompanied by theatrical effects and splendour.

62. Mateos, *op. cit.*, I: *Le cycle des douze mois* (Roma 1962), 184-187: at the end of the baptismal *troparion*, the patriarch comes to the baptismal font and baptises the candidates; then, the newly baptised led by the patriarch make a solemn entrance through the *Main Gates* into the nave and approach the pulpit; the chanting is going on. The psalm with which the baptismal ceremony ends is 'What God is great like Our God?'. This is followed by seven lections, i.e., readings from the Gospel, beginning with *Act*. 8, 26.

63. There are five different colours, which are used for the seasons of the liturgical calendar: see E. Hangen, *Symbols: Our Universal Language* (Wichita, KS 1962). In Byzantine colour symbolism, white is not only the colour of purity and sinlessness but also the colour of (divine) light: for example, Christ's robes at the Transfiguration are white. See L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford 1996), 106-107.

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With the Arab prisoners from the *Praetorium* it was different: as I said before, if these people were aristocrats, the authorities could ill-afford to openly convert them to Christianity against their will. The safest way to do it was to invite them to partake of court ceremonies, which took place on religious holidays associated with baptism. These were the Christmas Day and Easter Sunday banquets when large numbers of people — courtiers and guests alike — were supposed to be going back and forth between the palace and St. Sophia while chanting psalms and acclamations. The least obvious and, from a Muslim's point of view, the least painful way of making the Arab POWs undergo some quasi-baptism was to make them take part in this theatricalised ceremony, which was a mixture of secular and religious elements.

The Arabs' simple, beltless white robes must have been in stark contrast with the garments of every imaginable cut and colour, which the rest of the guests were wearing. Possibly, everybody but the poor Muslims was aware that these people were unknowingly playing the role of adult catechumens, or 'enlightened'. The connection with baptism is not all that direct but, after all, the authorities did not dare push the whole thing any further. Besides, the fact that Harun-ibn-Yahya describes the imperial banquets, and the POWs' participation in them, without mentioning anything about possible baptism of the Arabs suggests that the true meaning of what was happening on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday remained concealed from Muslim eyes. Indeed, the meaning of what was going on was camouflaged with gestures of generosity and goodwill on the part of the Byzantines: ibn-Yahya reports that, at the end of the twelve-hour banquet, the POWs were tipped, and each prisoner received two dinars and three dirhems.[64] The Muslims, however, were unable to read into the symbolic language of the Byzantine ceremonies because the Byzantine

64. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 388-389.

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symbols 'worked' within a Christian cultural context only.[65]

The Muslim POWs must have been aware of the obvious: that their simple white dress was different from the colourful dress of everybody else. As could be seen from the surviving Arab accounts, Muslims knew that the gold and purple colours of the emperor's robes symbolised supreme power; and they were aware of the symbolism, which the Byzantines attached to the display of wealth.[66] The symbolic meaning of the colour white, however, derives from the colour system of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Therefore, the Muslim POWs were unable to see the connection between the white colour of their apparel, on one hand, and the remission of sins which they were supposedly going through, on the other.

Their garment was also deprived of a belt, the ancient symbol of valour and prestige. Because they were only captives, however, the deprivation of a belt, and a sword — or a dagger — to go with it, must have been seen, by the Arabs, as something normal under the circumstances. Finally, they had to wear shoes, like everybody else, but this may not have been seen as a problem, either; a Muslim man ought to take his shoes off only when stepping on holy grounds, i.e., upon his entry into a mosque, not on other occasions.

Yet, for the average Byzantine observer, whose ability to read into the language of signs and colours offered some compensation for his inadequate formal education, this must have been quite a sight. The

65. That Muslim observers accepted Byzantine ceremonies at their face value could be seen from ibn-Yahya's description of a religious procession led by the emperor: eunuchs dressed in white, pages of Khazar and Turkic origin, and dignitaries of all ranks follow the emperor and his 'vizier' to the Great Church. Harun-ibn-Yahya describes, in great detail, the colours of their apparel and accessories, the imperial crown, and the trappings of the imperial horses; he even makes a note of the emperor's two different shoes: one shoe was red, the other black. Furthermore, he conveys, with remarkable precision, the ceremonial greetings of the 'vizier' (the logothete of the drome?), the answers of the emperor, and all the acclamations. Nevertheless, the Arab author does not offer any explanation as to what the meaning of this public ceremony was, or on which Christian holiday it took place. See Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 389-392. On the other hand, when describing the banquets at the palace, Harun-ibn-Yahya does not mention the dress of the Arab POWs, which leads me to believe that he did not suspect the Byzantines of any 'wrongdoing'.

66. See above, n. 65. Cf. El Cheikh-Saliba, *op. cit.*, 166-190, and esp. 185 sqq.

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Byzantine knew that the white colour of a man's garb normally made him a κατηχούμενος, or νεοφώτιστος. As for the belt, according to the Christian moralists, it was a symbol of self-restraint, chastity and moderation; therefore, every baptised man ought to wear a belt.[67] Although, by Leo's and Constantine's time, the Byzantines had already managed to turn the various types of waistbands, belts and girdles into a glamourous part of the ceremonial dress,[68] the belt *per se* retained its initial significance as a restrainer of lust. Not only did the Arabs lack this lust restraining component of a man's clothing, but their beltless garb placed them in stark contrast to the sword, or dagger, bearing Byzantine emperor and nobles. For the belt had yet another meaning in the Roman Christian symbolism: the sword attached to it stood for imperial authority. The emperor ought to bear a sword not only because he was the supreme commander of the Roman armed forces but also because he had to defend Christendom against its enemies. As Paul, *Rom.* XIII.4 wrote, the ruler 'beareth not the sword in vain'; how medieval Christians interpreted the Apostle's words could be seen from the words of an eighth-century pope, Paul I: he wrote that the Christian ruler must bear a sword for he is the 'revenger to execute wrath upon him who doeth evil'. In this, the emperor was assisted by the sword-bearing officers in his service.

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67. What symbolism Christian authors assigned to the belt as an accessory to the man's dress could best be seen from the following example: in 866, the newly converted Bulgarian ruler, Boris-Michael, sent Pope Nicholas I a long list of questions. In most cases, the prince was trying to find out whether the instructions, which the Greek missionaries had given to the Bulgarian people, were true, or false. Depending on whether the Greek and Latin practices coincided or not, the pope confirmed, or rejected, the Greek instructions. For example, Boris asked whether the Greeks were right when saying that a man, who goes to church without a belt, performs a grave sin and should be denied communion. In this case Nicholas I sided with the Greeks. He wrote back that, in Christian eyes, the belt has an important symbolic meaning: it stands for chastity, moderation and self-restraint; therefore, every baptised man must wear a belt. In order to substantiate his words, the pope quoted passages from the writings of the Latin Fathers and Pope Celestine I (422-432). See Pope Nicholas I, *Responsa ad Consulta Bulgarorum*, cap. LV in *MGH Epistulae* VI (ed. E. Perels), 587.

68. The *Book of Ceremonies* contains quite a few descriptions of richly decorated girdles, waistbands, belts and collars, each of them illustrating the bearer's status and position at the court. Even a foreign princess, Olga, was highly flattered when she received a girdle as a token of distinction: see Const. Porph., *De cerim.*, 594-598.

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In other words, for the average Byzantine, it was either the saints and angels (whose purity was not questioned anyway), or the people who were just about to step over the threshold of the faith (but had not become true Christians yet) that were not supposed to be wearing belts in public, and ought to be dressed in white. During certain religious processions led by the emperor eunuchs were dressed in white, too: probably, these white, sexless figures symbolised the martyrs who, during the Last Judgment, were to testify before Christ on account of their fellow human beings. Because the Muslim POWs attending the banquets were hardly seen as saints, angels or martyrs, it is safer to assume that they were seen as people who were being purified through lustration in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Because they had not joined the ranks of the true Christians yet, they did not wear belts, which would have symbolised their chastity and self-restraint; and they were the disarmed enemy, too.

While the formidable Muslim warriors, with their legendary *machoism*, were now reduced to the position of humble supplicants before the emperor (and before God), the striking contrast between their white, sexless 'robes of sinlessness' and the powerful purple colour of their master's dress was expected to underscore the elevated, God-like position of the *basileus*.[69] He was seen as a universal ruler, and an ultimate benefactor. He was the one, who had the power to make the empire's enemies tremble with fear and bow to his imperial authority; yet, he was also the one, who was glorified as being Christ-loving and *philanthropos*. The sharp contrast in colour and position was yet another means through which the imperial propaganda helped Byzantines, and Christian foreigners for that matter, visualise the difference between the impotency of the subdued enemy, on one hand, and the might of the Roman empire, on the other. This was a revelation

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69. In Western civilisation, the colour purple has been viewed as a symbol of supreme authority and power for over three thousand years now. Cf. M. Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (*Collection Latomus*, vol. 116), (Brussels 1970). Philotheos does not say anything about the cut and colour of the emperor's dress. There is every reason to believe, however, that on solemn occasions such as Christmas and Easter the *basileus* was dressed up in imperial gold and purple.

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of what the fate of all the empire's adversaries was going to be: once defeated, the former fearsome enemy would become a tame Christian brother, subject to the emperor.

The one element of the Muslims' dress that I have been unable to explain is their shoes. Philotheos is quite explicit about the highest-ranking Byzantine dignitaries and the two important 'Bulgarian friends': they are said to have been wearing *kampagia*. Probably, these were some richly decorated sandals, whose initial symbolism was associated with military virtue but which had come to signify elevated station in general. However, Philotheos says nothing about the shoes, or sandals, worn by the Byzantine officials of the lower ranks; neither does he say anything about the shoes worn by the 'barbarians' of the imperial guard. As for the Agarenes from the *Praetorium*, they are said to have been ὑποδεδεμένοι, 'with shoes/sandals on their feet'. If this fact is specifically mentioned in the *Kletorologion*, then it must have been important for some reason that Muslims should not be allowed to come barefoot to the banquet. On the other hand, the only occasions on which Christians seem to have walked barefoot were some religious processions. Philotheos does not go into this type of detail but we have Liudprand's description of a public procession, led by Emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963-969), which took place on Pentecost of 968: on their way to St. Sophia, the people are said to have been walking barefoot.[70] We may assume that, during the court ceremonies, shoes were seen as an accessory to the ceremonial dress rather, than an important symbol in its own right.

With their characteristic love for cryptograms, Byzantines assigned great importance to numbers, too. As could be seen from the *Kletorologion*, the people who were invited to the banquet of the *Nineteen Couches* had to be seated twelve by twelve, surrounding the emperor after the fashion of the Apostles. Why the number of the Agarenes was two times twelve while the low-ranking Bulgarians sitting next to them numbered only twelve is hard to tell. The banquet lasted twelve hours. The scene of the banquet was obviously made to resemble the Last Supper, with Jesus Christ surrounded by his

70. Liudprand of Cremona, *Legatio*, cap. IX, in *op. cit.*, 532.8-26.

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disciples, but it it not clear why a celebration of the Nativity ought
to be associated with this type of symbolism. Maybe, in Byzantine
eyes, the symbolism of Nativity and Epiphany went hand-in-hand
with the resurrectional symbolism? Or, maybe, the number twelve
associated with the Christmas banquets — e.g., having twelve people
per table, the banquets lasting twelve hours a day in the course of
twelve days and ending by the twelfth hour of the twelfth day —
was also somehow associated with the number twelve in the Old
Testament: e.g., the twelve tribes of Israel, who were God's chosen
people, and the emperor, who was their father, Abraham? Or, maybe,
it was associated with the number twelve that runs throughout the
*Book of Revelation*? The numbers associated with the Easter Day
banquet are even harder to decipher; for example, in this case the
number of the Agarenes from the *Praetorium* was eighteen; it equalled
the number of the low-ranking Bulgarians. The significance, which
Byzantine ceremonies attached to certain numbers borrowed from the
Judaeo-Christian prophetic tradition, the Gospels and the *Book of
Revelation*, altogether deserves to be subject to a special study.

   The fact that the low-ranking Bulgarians were seated next to the
Saracen POWs at the Christmas Day and Easter Sunday banquets must
have had special significance as well. The Bulgarians symbolised the
former terrible enemy, who was now a 'brother in the Spirit' of the
Byzantines and who, allegedly, recognised the universal authority of
the Byzantine emperor.[71] When seeing the Muslims seated next to the
already pacified Bulgarians, those present at the banquets ought to
realise that now it was the Arabs' turn to become 'brothers in the Spirit'
of the Byzantines and acknowledge the emperor's universal authority.

   Whenever one discusses the treatment of Muslim POWs at Byzantine
hands, one should also look into the tenth-century triumphs. The
reigns of Leo's son and grandson bore witness to several triumphs
celebrating Byzantine victories over the Arabs. Whether these
celebrations were carried out in the streets of the capital or the
Hippodrome, they invariably included one of the most important

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71. The idea that, through their conversion to Byzantine Christianity, Bulgarians
have become tame 'brothers/children in the Spirit' of the Byzantines has found reflection
in numerous Byzantine sources. See, for example, Theoph. Cont. IV.15, (Bonn 1838),
163.19-165.10.

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elements of the old, Roman triumph: this was the parade of trophies and prisoners. The subdued position of the defeated enemy was demonstrated in various ways: the prisoners were paraded on foot under the cheers and jeers of the crowds; they had to perform *proskynesis* before the emperor while the Roman troops held their confiscated arms and standards upside down, and the triumphant crowds were chanting psalms and acclamations.[72] None of these celebrations, however, involved a change of clothes for the captives. The ritual dressing of Muslim captives in white was obviously not part of the Byzantine triumph.

Of the several triumphs that were celebrated under Constantine VII and his son, Romanos II (959-963), there is only one triumph during which Muslim captives were paraded in white dress. This was the triumph of the general Nikephoros Phokas, which was celebrated in the imperial capital in 962, in the reign of Romanos II. As McCormick points out, the middle Byzantine triumph normally ended with a Thanksgiving service to the Virgin celebrated in St. Sophia. An extremely pious man, Nikephoros may have wanted to add an extra religious element to his triumph: instead of riding in a chariot, or on horseback, the general chose to walk, like a humble penitent. Behind him followed the traditional parade of booty and prisoners; the prisoners were all clad in white.[73]

That Nikephoros viewed his campaigns against the Arabs as religiously important could be seen from the threats, which he allegedly made: among other things, he is said to have threatened to capture Mecca and establish the throne of Christ there.[74] As emperor, Nikephoros entered into an open conflict with the patriarch of Constantinople, Polyeuktos (956-970), because he demanded that the Christian soldiers, who had fallen in battle with Muslims, should be recognised as martyrs by the Orthodox church; the patriarch dismissed the emperor's

72. McCormick, *op. cit.*, 162-168; Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 383-384. See also El Cheikh-Saliba, *op. cit.*, 183-185: about the Arabs' repulsion for the act of *proskynesis*.

73. Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia* in *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1838), 759-760. Cf. McCormick, *op. cit.*, 168.

74. See the Arab sources, which convey Nikephoros' threats, in El Cheikh-Saliba, *op. cit.*, 159-162.

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demands by saying that it was in contradiction to the canons.

During religious processions, Emperor Nikephoros Phokas was hailed as, among other things, 'the pale death of the Saracens'.[75] Liudprand, who mentions this in connection with the Pentecost celebration, seems to have been confused over Nikephoros' laudatory epithets; the emperor was probably glorified as Σαρακηνοκτόνος, by analogy with Βουλγαροκτόνος, βαρβαροκτόνος, and 'Ρωμαϊοκτόνος (the last epithet being used with reference to a hateful Bulgarian ruler). Nevertheless, Liudprand did not entirely miss the point: this was Nikephoros Phokas' double glorification as a physical slayer of Arabs and a terminator of the Muslims' impure beliefs.

The triumph over the Arabs, which Nikephoros Phokas had celebrated several years earlier, seems to have had certain apocalyptic connotations: it reminds one of the so-called *Triumph of the Elect* (*Rev.* 7), in which a huge crowd of 'every nation and race, people and tongue stood before the throne of the Lamb, dressed in long white robes and holding palm branches in their hands'. The Lamb, i.e., Jesus Christ, was represented by the emperor; probably, the triumphant general aimed at representing himself as one of the martyrs, 'the ones who have survived the great period of trial' and who 'have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'. The Arab POWs, all dressed in white, were probably identified by the crowds as martyrs, too: now they were going through their 'great period of trial' in order to become purified, after which 'the Lamb on the throne' (Christ as well as the emperor) would shepherd them into salvation and eternal bliss.

Knowing Nikephoros Phokas' dealings with the Arabs, it is no wonder that, eventually, they were only too glad to find out that the 'tyrant' had been murdered; but they regretted the fact that he had died in Constantinople, and they could neither see, nor partake of, the assassination.[76]

75. Liudprand of Cremona, *Legatio*, cap. X, in *op. cit.*, 532.28. The epithet 'pale death of the Saracens' is probably associated with the images of the Apocalyptic 'Pale Rider', whose other name is Death; this image was popular in Western Europe. Cf. Otto of Freising VI.26, in *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, XVI (Darmstadt 1960), 470.28: Emperor Otto II is called *pallida Saracenorum mors*.

76. M.Canard, *Quelques receuils de textes relatifs à l'émir Saif al-Dawla* (Algiers 1934), 415-418: Ibn Nubata's sermon celebrating Emperor Nikephoros' assassination.

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On the other hand, the *Book of Revelation*, with its extravagant symbolism conveyed through allegories, colours and numbers, must have been a rich source of ideas for the Byzantine *Zeremoniellmeister*. Christian mythology in general, and the elaborate ritual of the Byzantine church in particular, seem to have been important sources of ideas for those, who were in charge of the imperial court ceremonial. Now and then, emperors took special interest in the making, and re-making, of ceremonies since the current ceremonial was supposed to reflect the emperor's own ideas of chastity, piety, power and glory.

Back to the main question of the Arab POWs and the imperial banquets: we do not know whether, in the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Muslim prisoners were invited to the banquets, or not. Constantine did include Philotheos's work in his own treatise on court ceremonial but this does not necessarily mean that the practice of inviting Muslim prisoners to the Christmas and Easter banquets still existed at that time. Yet, Constantine was immensely interested in the Arab world, and in the empire's dealings with it.[77] His interest in the Arabs found graphic expression in the lavish receptions, which he gave to Muslim delegations.[78] Maybe, when all these facts are taken into account, one may assume that Constantine continued the practice of having Arab prisoners at the banquets. After all, he seem to have been very fond of ceremonies that were overloaded with symbolism. Constantine would have hardly failed to appreciate the complex meaning of a ceremony, which involved the participation of Muslim captives in the celebration of Christmas and Easter: this may have presented him with yet another opportunity of displaying imperial generosity while subjecting the Muslims to a deeply coded ceremonial of conversion, of which they remained totally ignorant.

77. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematibus*, ed., trans. and comm. A. Pertusi (Città del Vaticano 1952), 73, 77, 94-95, 97-98; cf. Const. Porph., *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik (Budapest 1949), chaps. 22-25. While, under Constantine's father, it was the Arabs and Bulgaria that seemed to have been assigned the utmost importance in the empire's relations with the outer world, under Constantine himself the focus of the imperial foreign policy obviously shifted to the *Rhos*, who now came to share the first position with the Arabs. As for Bulgaria and Francia, they are not discussed in *DAI*.

78. Const. Porph., *De cerim.*, 584. Cf. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 502.

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However, it was his father, Emperor Leo VI, who must be credited with the invention of this coded ceremony: his military victories over the Arabs and the leniency with which he subsequently treated Arab POWs in Constantinople; his efforts to represent himself as a truly universal ruler presiding over an ethnically diverse but religiously uniform world; the broad range of his intellectual pursuits that covered everything from astrology and numerology down to hymnography and military art, and his interest in ceremonies were probably the factors which, put together, brought about this ceremonial innovation.

The Byzantine public, as I pointed out, were highly apprehensive of the language of symbols. Whether these were triumphs, public processions, diplomatic receptions or banquets, the Byzantines were used to seeing their emperor as being the central figure in a complex ceremonial, which invariably had a religious dimension to it, and which always conveyed the same message: what God is great like Our God, and like our empire? As for the Muslim observers of Byzantine ceremonies, they failed to apprehend the baptismal, resurrectional, or apocalyptic connotations of these ceremonies, and accepted them very much at their face value. Thus, during the Christmas and Easter banquets, the blissful ignorance of the Arab POWs enabled them to enjoy the delicious food and the generous imperial tips without any seeming signs of distress. They were obviously unaware of the proverbial warning that one should fear the Greeks even when they come bearing gifts.

*Sofia, Bulgaria*

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